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MADAME LOUISE DE FRANCE

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THE LIFE

OF

Madame Louise de France

DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XV

KNOWN ALSO AS THE MOTHER TÉRÈSE DE ST. AUGUSTIN

BY THE AUTHOR OF

'A DOMINICAN ARTIST,' 'LIFE OF S. FRANCIS
DE SALES,' ETC. ETC.

*'I had rather be a doorkeeper in the House of my God than to
dwell in the tents of ungodliness'*

Holy Ghost College
SCHOLASTICATE,
Pittsburgh, Pa.
RIVINGTONS

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PREFACE

THE substance of this brief Memoir is taken from a somewhat diffuse Life of Madame Louise de France, compiled by a Carmelite nun, and printed at Autun. At the present time, when the spirit of Religious self-devotion is so greatly reviving in the Church of England, it is thought that many even of those living in the world might be interested in following a Princess, belonging to a family which fills so conspicuous a place in European history, through the rise and progress of her vocation, while living amid a dazzling and profligate Court

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1967

—through the touching, though often quaint episodes of her postulate and novitiate, and her earnest and devout life as a professed nun, until the happy day when it pleased GOD to call her to Himself, and spare her the sight of the miseries which were about to sweep over her country.

That Madame Louise's life was happier than that of her relations, in the troublous world of French politics and society, will scarcely be denied by any. The principal charm in her history perhaps lies in the great strength and warmth of her affections, and the lively way in which they were poured out in behalf of all she loved, notwithstanding her rigid adherence to S. Teresa's rule, and her earnest care in repressing such outward demonstrations of tenderness as could in any way militate against her first and highest Love. But assuredly, no daughter living in the world could have been more dutiful and

loving than Madame Louise was to Louis XV.; and the close affection and intercourse maintained with her Royal sisters, and nephews, and nieces, as well as with other friends, is a reply to the prejudice which would fain have it supposed that those who are called to serve GOD in the Religious life must therefore loosen the natural ties with which He has surrounded them, and which, if rightly appreciated, should be all as so many stepping-stones to the highest and purest Love of all. All true affection must tend upwards; all earthly love, to be true and pure, must be in and through that Dear Lord Whose Love is the Very Highest example of all Love. And it is not too bold to assert that those who love Him most will best know how to love and use such earthly treasures of friendship or relationship as He has given them. Should the Life of Madame Louise lead any to think more deeply of this, and of the Religious life, "*la bonne Prin-*

cesse" will still be the means of forwarding the cause she loved so well, among a people, and in a generation, very different from her own.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Birth of Louise Marie de France—Education at Fontevault—First Communion—Return to Versailles—First Dawn of Religious Vocation,	I

CHAPTER II.

Death of Queen Marie Leczinska—Louis XV. consents to his Daughter's leaving the World—Her Interview with the Abbé Bertin—Madame Louise arrives at S. Denis—Her Postulate,	33
---	----

CHAPTER III.

Madame Louise's First Days at S. Denis—Sœur Julie—The King's First Visit,	59
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

PAGE

Madame Louise takes the Habit, and enters upon her Novitiate—Letter from Pope Clement—Madame Louise among the Novices—Letter from the Em- press Maria Theresa,	94
---	----

CHAPTER V.

Madame Louise takes the Final Vows—Letter from Pope Clement—Madame Louise is appointed Mis- tress of the Novices—Conduct in her Office—Sœur Raphael—Visits from the King,	125
--	-----

CHAPTER VI.

Madame Louise elected Prioress of S. Denis—Her per- sonal Asceticism—Death of Louis XV.—Burial at S. Denis—Visits of Louis XVI. and Marie An- toinette—The Prioress's care for her Community,	179
--	-----

CHAPTER VII.

Return of a Strayed Sister—Death of the Mère S. Alexis —Visit from the Emperor of Austria—Sœur Julie elected Prioress, and Madame Louise again Mis- tress of the Novices—Restoration of the Church—	
--	--

Troubles of the Church in Austria and the Low Countries—Death of Madame Sophie—The Community seeks to re-elect Madame Louise as Prioress—She refuses—Charity shown to the Carmelites of Brussels—Letters to their Prioress—Final Suppression of Religious Houses in Flanders, &c.—Letter from the Archbishop of Malines to the Carmelites of Brussels—They take Refuge at S. Denis—Visit from the King of Sweden—Death of the Mère Julie—Madame Louise succeeds her as Prioress,	227
--	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

Madame Louise's Last Illness, and Death—The Community of S. Denis Suppressed—Sœur Raphael at Besançon and Turin—She returns to Paris, and restores the Community, first in Paris, and finally at Autun,	266
---	-----

Holy Ghost College
SCHOLASTICATE,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

THE LIFE

OF

MADAME LOUISE DE FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE eighteenth century; France; Versailles; Louis XV., called indeed le Bien Aimé, but a monarch whose name fills the imagination with visions of diplomatic falsehood, courtly cabal, and sensual profligacy, rather than those of self-devotion and holiness, whose memory suggests a Pompadour, a Châteauroux, and a Du Barry, rather than a S. Theresa; whose period at once brings before us the school of Voltaire, Diderot, and d'Alembert, and whose most notable and best remembered royal saying was, "Après moi le deluge!"—it is in this eighteenth century, this birthplace, and this parentage that we come

suddenly upon an episode of unworldliness and saintliness, such as we are little apt to expect to see issuing forth from kings' houses, where "soft clothing," and all that is implied therein, are ordinarily looked for.

On the 15th July, 1737, Marie Leczinska, Louis XV.'s Polish Queen, gave birth at Versailles to her eighth and youngest daughter, who, that same day, was baptized by Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne, Archbishop of Vienne, receiving the names of Louise Marie. Louis XV. had received certain religious impressions in his early education, and the Queen was a distinctly pious and Christian woman. Perhaps the troubles of her own house (she was the daughter of Stanislas Leczinska, the dethroned King of Poland), and the many thorns and briers which must have beset her daily life as Louis's Queen, made her more anxious than an ordinary royal mother might have been, to train her children for a higher Court than that of Versailles. Accordingly, Madame Louise was sent to the Benedictine Abbey of Fontevrault, at the early age of eleven months, with two of her sisters, Madame Sophie and Madame Thérèse. Madame de la Rochechouard was the abbess at that period, but the care of the little princess was specially entrusted to Madame de Soutlanges, a lady who seems to have been equally adapted by personal

holiness and admirable good sense for her office. This was not without some of the anxieties which will beset even royal nurseries. Madame Louise was given up in her early babyhood in a severe illness, and though this alarm proved groundless, she shortly afterwards had a fall from her bed, (her royal impatience being weary of waiting for her nurse), the result of which was a slight crookedness in after life, which the Princess exaggerated to the utmost on one occasion when an ambassador visited her father's court with a view to selecting one of the royal daughters of France to be the wife of his Imperial master, she having already chosen to be the bride of none save Christ, although her determination was not generally known.

Madame Louise's childhood seems not to have been marked by any precocious or unhealthy sensibilities. She was lively, cheerful, impetuous, and somewhat proud, and a less judicious training than that of Madame de Soutlanges might have failed to develop the strong religious feeling which, as it was, grew with her growth. By nature she had a strong appreciation of her exalted rank, and a great inclination to exact the reverence and homage due to it, which characteristic, together with a decided tendency to sarcasm, was a dangerous foundation for the spiritual life. Two or three amusing traits of infantine

pride are recorded of her. Even at the Abbey of Fontevault a certain etiquette was observed around the Princess, and Madame Louise was extremely particular as to its maintenance, and could tolerate no omission. One such detail was, that when the Princesses drank during their meals, the attendants who served them always stood. Madame de Soutlanges observing that Madame Louise treated these attendants after a somewhat supercilious fashion, gave orders that this form should be discontinued, whereupon the young Princess stopped drinking immediately, issuing the stately order, "*Debout s'il vous plait, Madame Louise boit !*" The wise answer was that Madame Louise could drink as she pleased, but that her ladies would certainly sit still so long as their little mistress forgot that gentleness and consideration for others are essentially royal qualities.

On another occasion, one of the attendants reproved the Princess unjustly, as she considered. It so chanced that the woman had something the matter with one of her eyes; and Madame Louise was ready with the retort, "*If you would use both eyes, perhaps you would find out that you are wrong.*" "*One eye is quite enough to show me, that you, Madame, are very proud,*" was the answer, and then the better nature of the little lady came forth, and a kindly apology was offered for the sharp words

given at first. Nor did she only exact what she considered her due from those visibly surrounding her; when but four years old, Madame Louise remarked one day to her governess, "You know, Mimie, that I love God, and I give Him my heart every day, but what is He going to give me in return?" She was quick in apprehending the religious instructions given her, and always disposed to accept them in a practical sense; as, for instance, having been taught the Saviour's promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them," the next time that Madame Louise went to say her prayers in her oratory, she called one of the attendants who was working near, bidding her come and kneel down too and pray, "because then our Lord would come amidst them."

One day Madame de Soutlanges found her royal pupil in an agony of tears, and on examination it appeared that an attendant had been indulging in idle gossip about some great prince just born, who was to be Madame Louise's future husband. The child was crying bitterly, and protesting that she would never have any bridegroom save Christ. Her governess calmed her by the assurance that the whole story was without foundation, but Madame Louise could never regain her affection for the person who had so deceived her, and used to allude

in her later life to this occurrence as an instance of the mischief done by telling children anything untrue.

When Madame Louise was seven years old, her sister, Madame Thérèse Félicité, who was a year older, died, and it is probable that her childish impressions of religion were strengthened by this event; as also by a dangerous illness of which Madame de Soutlanges nearly died. Madame Louise was devotedly attached to her governess, and prayed with all the earnestness of an affectionate child for a life so dear to her, making a vow that if it was spared, she would recite the whole "Office de la Providence" daily for a year. This vow was religiously kept, though she did not speak of it for some time afterwards. Madame de Soutlanges returned her pupil's affection devotedly, and testified it by her judicious treatment; neither rebuke or punishment was spared when due, nor did she fear to lessen that affection by such a course; generally, however, an appeal to the Princess's better feelings would suffice, and the question, "When you are grown up, Madame, would you like me to be blamed because you are imperfectly educated for your high position?" led her to persevere in the most unwelcome lesson. Queen Marie Leczinska used often to visit her little daughters at Fontevault, and from time to time they joined her at the Court; on which occasions we find a pretty domestic tableau

of the Royal Mother surrounded by her children, all employed in needlework for the poor, while she taught them lessons of piety, told them graphic tales of the wars and perils to which their father and his soldiers were exposed, always ending by urging them to pray for his preservation and blessing. Madame Louise seems to have enjoyed the privilege of the youngest, and to have been a special pet of her father; and when she heard of his entering upon any danger, her whole heart filled with anguish lest any harm should reach "Papa Roi," as she called him. "Does Papa Roi mean to take away all our sleep?" she asked once, when the King was undertaking some perilous expedition; and in the midst of her lessons she would stop and cry out "Papa Roi," in a passion of anxiety, then try to go on a while, and soon break out into a fresh burst of anxiety.

When the elder Princesses, Madames Sophie and T  r  se were prepared for Confirmation, it was thought well that Madame Louise should share their instructions, and accordingly she received that sacrament on the Feast of the Assumption 1745, and from that time her own efforts were steadily joined to those of her wise governess in subduing the faults of her strong vigorous character, which contained not a little self-will, as perhaps most naturally strong characters are apt to do.

When Madame Louise was eleven, Madame de Soutlanges deemed it fitting that she should receive her First Communion, and her governess was both perplexed and distressed when, in reply to all her questions on the subject, she could obtain no answer, save "It is too soon for me to think of it." For once failing to understand her pupil, Madame de Soutlanges reproved Madame Louise's supposed indifference to so great a blessing, and thereby drew forth the expression of her exceeding desire for it, but also of her keen sense of unfitness for the privilege. One item of this unfitness was, that the volatile Princess could not yet say her Catechism perfectly, though she understood its meaning. Once set at rest as to these difficulties, Madame Louise began ardently to prepare, especially for her general confession, which she begged to be allowed to read, when prepared, to her governess. During this recital, she once hesitated, paused, and then with a gulp, went on, to Madame de Soutlanges's great surprise, "I accuse myself of having wished I had been born a Turk, out of vanity." Madame de Soutlanges naturally inquired the motive of so quaint a wish, and how it could spring from vanity? "Well, you see," was the answer, "I liked to fancy myself making a magnificent renunciation of the Mohammedan faith, and heroically embracing Christianity." Madame de Sout-

lances quietly replied, that, without being born a Turk, the Princess might hereafter find opportunities of renouncing what was scarcely less opposed to God than a false creed—the world, the flesh, and the devil; snares which beset all Christians, still more such as by their birth are placed in elevated positions.

Madame Louise's First Communion was made November 21st, 1748, and from that time her great joy was to receive the Blessed Sacrament as often as she was permitted. Years after, she wrote thus of this season, "From my earliest days, Thy love, my God, poured out upon me an overflowing abundance of tenderness and favour; but, above all, I thank Thee that from the first entrance of Thy truth into my soul, Thou didst fill it with a longing desire for the sacrament of Thine altar, so that, above all things, I longed to receive and to possess Thee. With that gift thou didst give me a lively faith and an ardent love; Thou heardest my desire and fulfilledst it with Thine Own very Self O precious gift, for which all my life I will thank Thee, and strive to thank Thee more. Above all do I remember the grace of that day," (her First Communion), "when kneeling in Thy sanctuary I offer thee anew my soul as Thy dwelling-place, and intreat Thee to accept the heart Thou hast deigned to unite so closely to Thyself; may it belong wholly and solely to Thee,

and may a generous, fervent, faithful love, ever be offered therein to Thee, in gratitude for the love which led Thee so to bless me in Thy first coming into my heart."

When Madame Louise attained her fourteenth year, it was thought fit to remove her from the shelter of Fontevrault, and give her the wonted position of a daughter of France at her Royal father's brilliant court. The separation from those good nuns, and especially from Madame de Soutlanges, was a great trial to her; but, on the other hand, Madame Louise possessed warm family affections, and the society of her mother and sisters had a powerful attraction. The general tone of their intercourse seems to have been marked with a simplicity and piety very different to the court atmosphere. Queen Marie Leczinska and her daughters joined in various schemes for relieving the poor, often at the sacrifice of their own pleasure and even comfort, and the Queen's example had a strong influence upon Madame Louise's daily increasing vocation. "I often used to think," so she wrote later on, "especially when I was enjoying the blessing of communion, how many useless sacrifices I was making for the world's sake—sacrifices for which I could hope no reward from God—and I used to watch the Queen, my mother, with admira-

tion, for although she was most faithful to the important duties which her position involved, she knew how to maintain a free spirit, and lived like a saint in the midst of the Court. I used to wish to be more with her, and have more personal intercourse with her; but even one's natural affections are forced to yield before the customs and etiquette of a Court. I longed to be more like her, but my will was not strong enough, and I was dissatisfied with myself, and continually heard an inward voice whispering in the depths of my heart that I was not giving to God all that He asked of me. I think that even then I knew that, like S. Augustine, I was afraid lest He should speak too clearly to me, and that I should be constrained to give myself up unreservedly to His service."

In her Court life Madame Louise was not free to follow her own devices, any more than the Queen, her mother, but "*la bonne Princesse*," as she was familiarly called, with the help of Madame de Soutlanges's advice, led a more interior life from the first than was the wont of King Louis's Court. Her pious exercises continued to be almost as frequent as at Fontevrault—prayer, meditation, self-examination, spiritual reading, and the office were her daily food, and the courtiers commented upon her regular frequentation of the Sacraments; her communions

seemed to them so numerous, while in her heart she sighed for a clear and more uninterrupted nearness to her Lord. It was in these moments of interior approach to her Divine Master that the Princess grew more and more confirmed in the vocation which was drawing her irresistibly to the religious life; and each time she left the altar with a clearer perception as to God's Will working in her, a more absolute surrender to that Will, and a deeper and more persevering aim to fit herself for its perfection by dying daily to herself, and preparing, through self-abnegation and mortification in little things, to offer ultimately an acceptable and deliberate holocaust to Him who had so early called her to leave all and follow Him.

Naturally gifted with a very royal presence and great dignity of appearance and manner, as well as a quick wit and lively perceptions, and considerable power of attracting and influencing others, Madame Louise was a general favourite at the Court, where those who were incapable of imitating her good points, were still not blind to the charms of her even temper, her patience and unexacting manners, as well as an increasing recollection, which, considering her childish impetuosity, was rather the work of grace than of nature. Her tastes revolted against the favourite amusements of the day—cards and such games were a weariness to her: riding and hunting

her real pleasures. Her health was not good, and after a long excursion, "I used to long to be quiet and rest," she wrote to an intimate friend, "but the time for cards would come, and I was obliged to go, *par complaisance*. Then followed the theatre, and then again I had to go, still *par complaisance*, and I used to go to sleep over it! This kind of life, so unlike my convent habits, fevered and wearied me; but I was at Court, and must needs do as the Court did, so I did it without complaining, but to the damage of my health and against my liking." Still day by day the Princess won something from the world for God, and while carefully avoiding whatever might seem like ostentatious piety, she steadily persevered in seeking to lead a more detached life, pouring out her soul in more prolonged and fervent prayers in her oratory, and receiving in return an ever increasing attraction to the cross of Christ, to which her whole soul became daily more closely bound.

About a year after Madame Louise's appearance at Court her religious impressions were quickened by the death of Madame Henriette. "Hers was a beautiful example," she wrote later; "Henriette led the life of a saint—she was always praying, even when she was obliged to go to the theatre. Her death made a deep impression upon me; I felt how very blessed it was to die such a death, but I also

felt that my life was sadly unlike hers, and I feared to die before I had begun to live better."

About the same time another circumstance tended to develop the Princess's vocation. The young Comtesse de Rupelmonde, early left a widow, voluntarily turned from the many attractions the world yet offered her, as well as the more powerful bonds of a pious mother's love, and the intimate friendship of Queen Marie Leczinska, and went, as the Court said, to "bury herself" in the Carmelite Order. The world in those days at the Court of France was not very different from our English world now, and the comments and criticisms made upon the Comtesse de Rupelmonde might easily be mistaken for modern remarks upon one of ourselves leaving the world for a Sister's life. "What folly, what want of sense!" the gossips of Paris and Versailles exclaimed; "just as if she couldn't be religious and stay in the world! where perhaps her example might do some good. What is the use of all this fuss about the religious life? it is sure to end in nothing—a few months of the hard dreary life of the Carmelites will extinguish all her zeal; or even if she did persevere, it is absurd to suppose that her health could stand the sort of thing—just as if a woman brought up at Court could take to a Carmelite's life! Well, at all events, one may be sure she will soon give it all up."

Madame Louise heard, and pondered. She did not like so much publicity on such a subject, and some of those who delivered this opinion were persons she was inclined to respect; on the other hand, she did not wonder to see another weary like herself of the hollow and unsatisfying life of a Court, and when the Queen proposed to take her daughters to assist at Madame de Rupelmonde's "*vêture*," Madame Louise gladly went, and attentively studied what was visible to her of the Countess's real feelings. The novice appeared calm and cheerful, and as though sincerely rejoicing in the step she was taking. "This is real courage," the Princess said to herself, "this is how the Kingdom of Heaven is taken by force!" And the Saviour's words, "Except ye also repent, ye shall all likewise perish," forced themselves involuntarily upon her mind.

From this time the question of her own religious vocation assumed an altogether new and more definite shape. Madame Louise thought and prayed continually concerning it, seizing every opportunity of visiting religious houses, and consulting her dearest friend and confidante, Madame de Soutlanges, on the subject. At this time her inclination was to the Order of the Visitation, which was expressly designed by S. Francis de Sales for women whose health was delicate, and she told Madame de Soutlanges that

she believed herself called by God to that Order, as her health could not endure austerities, and moreover, she felt the most exceeding distaste for the strict inclosure of cloister life. Like a wise friend, Madame de Soutlanges contented herself with encouraging her former pupil to persevere in prayer and waiting upon God's will, never doubting but that in His own good time He would make plain to her how He would have her serve Him.

Meanwhile, Madame Louise heard all that was said about her friend the Comtesse de Rupelmonde, now Sister Thais, the Carmelite novice, and sometimes felt a little shaken as to the Countess's vocation proving real. "I was terribly afraid," she writes, "lest some fine day I should be told that Sister Thais had thrown aside the Carmelite habit, and was about to reappear at Court as Comtesse de Rupelmonde. The King and Queen and my brother were almost the only people who did not disapprove what she had done, but they always maintained that she had chosen the better part, and that it was very wrong to blame her for seeking thus to set forward her salvation. Their taking this line, encouraged me to hope that, if I had grace to remain faithful to my vocation, they might consent to my following it." At last, the day came when the world was constrained to believe in the Countess's perseverance, and Sister Thais

made her final profession, calmly, fervently, regardless of that world's opinion. The Princess was exceedingly rejoiced at this, and gained fresh courage. "Her first entrance into Carmel did but little for me," she wrote afterwards, "the world's idle talk choked my better impressions, but the final ceremony, when Sister Thais took the veil, struck me so forcibly, that from that time I never hesitated as to my vocation. It was necessary for me to see, like S. Thomas, before I believed that nothing could make me happy save being consecrated for ever to God." So full and clear was the Princess's conviction that before leaving the convent, (that in the Rue de Grenelle, since destroyed), she sought an interview with the sub-prioress whom she knew, and being received by the nun in the convent parlour, Madame Louise at once explained her wish to be instructed in the detail of the Carmelite Rule. The sub-prioress was struck with the definiteness of purpose which the Princess's question showed, and remarked, "One would almost fancy that Madame was thinking of becoming a daughter of S. Teresa herself!" "And why not," was the half-playful answer, "since the daughters of S. Teresa are so happy?" No further explanations were asked or given, but the mother of this Carmelite house gave the Princess a copy of their Constitutions, which she kept locked up in a silver reliquary, on

which was engraved, "Relique de Sainte T  r  se," and which she diligently studied whenever she could find a private opportunity. Soon after her death, the Abb   Figon chanced to be travelling with a certain Lafontaine, who had been groom of the chamber to Madame Louise from the time of her leaving Fontevrault until her final departure from Court for S. Denis. The Abb   fell into talk with the old servant, who spoke enthusiastically of his Royal mistress, and was charmed to dwell upon her merits with one who knew her. "Was not Madame Louise sometimes a little proud?" the Abb   asked. "Not a bit," was the answer, "she was the best mistress in the world. I never knew her to be cross with me but twice, and then I was so surprised, that long after, when I went to see her at S. Denis, I ventured to ask why she had been vexed? 'Oh,' she said, 'the truth is that you came into my room just when I was reading the Rule of S. Teresa, and I could not bear any one to catch me studying that!'"

The Queen often visited the Carmelites' house at Compi  gne, where she had a small apartment to which she occasionally retired for a few days, taking part in the nuns' offices; and without knowing what she was doing, she used on her return to excite her daughter's longings, by describing to her and the other Princesses the happy life led by the nuns. The

Queen's appreciation of it was indeed so true, that Madame Louise often was on the point of confiding her hopes to her mother, but at that time she was in such delicate health, frequently spitting blood, that a refusal to allow such a determination seemed inevitable, and Madame Louise dared not express her wishes. But the Queen had her own views upon the subject; her admiration for her daughter's character was great. "I not only love Louise, I respect her," she was repeatedly heard to say, and she did not fail to perceive the princess's growing vocation. "You will see," Queen Marie Leczinska said to her confessor, the Jesuit Father Bieganski, "my Louise will want to be a Carmelite some day, but with such health as she has, the poor child will never be fit for it." One day, when at the Convent of S. Denis, the Prioress presented her niece, Mademoiselle Dillon, to the Queen, who found that the young lady had remained some years beyond the usual time in her novitiate. On asking the reason, her Majesty was told that Mademoiselle Dillon's profession was delayed, because her mother could not bear to make the personal sacrifice involved by her daughter's taking the vows. "If I had a daughter who wished to become a religious," the Queen said, "all my love for her should never hinder my consent to her doing so."

Madame Louise consulted the Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur de Beaumont, as to her vocation, and he counselled her to continue to pray and prepare herself for its fulfilment, but not to put forward her wishes at present, until God should see fit to show His will concerning her, and make her way plain. Accordingly, though her obedience cost her some struggle, Madame Louise took no external steps towards the attainment of her wishes, but she studied the Constitutions of S. Teresa more diligently than ever, and at the same time, she sought in every way within her reach to practise such austerities as she thought would prepare her for the future at which she aimed. Thus she would sit for hours without any fire during the winter, and whereas she had formerly been rather fastidious in the matter of food, so that the royal cooks complained that she was hard to please, Madame Louise determinedly resisted this weakness, always eating those dishes which she liked least. The result as to the poor cooks was no improvement, for, finding that she did not eat their most carefully dressed dishes, they still considered it impossible to please her, and under this imputation of gourmandise, the Princess allowed herself to remain, as a sort of atonement for her past fastidiousness. She was anxious to procure one of the rough serge garments, such as the Carmelite nuns wear, but

could not think how to accomplish it, and hearing of a profession having taken place at the Compiègne house, she wrote to the Prioress as follows :—

“I want to ask a favour of you, but it is a very great secret, which no one whatever must know. Will you be so very kind as to send me the serge tunic which your novice left off yesterday when she took the habit? I should not like anything to be known about it, because some people would laugh at it, and others would think it very extraordinary, but, for my part, I look upon the dress worn by a novice when she makes the sacrifice of herself almost as a relic. You might send it me well sealed up by your tourière some morning, with orders to deliver it to me in person.”

The mother Prioress complied with Madame Louise's request without anybody finding out what was done, and the Princess at once began to wear the rough garment, to which she soon became accustomed. Later on, she obtained a hair shirt or cilicium, and during the remainder of her court life, she took great delight in wearing it beneath her splendid outer clothing, as a perpetual remembrance to herself that she was passing onwards to seek the life of mortification and self-denial, which would bring her nearer to her Heavenly Bridegroom.

One of the Princess's attempts at self-mortification

was essentially practical, and will meet with sympathy from many a delicately nurtured modern lady. She detested the smell of tallow! but knowing that the Carmelites always burned tallow candles, she determined to conquer this weakness, and contrived to procure a packet of the unsavoury articles, through the help of some woman not in her own service. At first the royal nose could scarcely endure the presence of the unsavoury packet in the apartment, and when at length Madame Louise took courage to light a candle, it was but for a few minutes. After a time, however, she accustomed herself to use the offensive tallow as freely as wax candles, always lighting them as soon as her attendants retired and left her alone for the night.

So things continued for some years, the Princess's attraction to the cloister, and therein specially to the Carmel, increased daily, and her longing to confide it to her mother was great, but obedience to the Archbishop still restrained her. But Madame Louise sorrowfully reflected that the best days of her life were passing away, as she thought uselessly, in the world.

On her twenty-fifth birthday, Monseigneur de Montmorin, the Bishop of Langres, happened to pay her a visit. She told him that she had just completed her twenty-fifth year. "Madame has fulfilled half her

days," was the Bishop's remark ; and so it proved to be. Fresh obstacles to her quitting her mother arose in the death of the Dauphin and Dauphiness. Queen Marie Leczinska was devotedly attached to her son, and although her resignation and submission to God's will never faltered, her already feeble health suffered severely under this addition to the many sorrows of her life. It was evident that she was soon to pass from her thorny crown of this world to the rest of that world where all her hopes and desires had long been fixed. Sickness and sorrow had done their gracious work, and the gentle Queen made ready to depart. Fondly loved by, and loving all her children, Madame Louise seems to have been her "*enfant de predilection*," and the young aspirant to the Carmel loved her mother with a most passionate and devoted affection, which daily increased as she watched the growing holiness and submission of the royal sufferer, whose humility, however, led her to conceal whatever tended to her own credit. Later on, Madame Louise said to one of her friends that well as she knew her mother's virtues, she had discovered far more than she thought for at the last, and had learnt still more after her death than during her life. The Princess could no longer conceal her desire to leave the world, and the Archbishop pronounced her vocation to be of the

most satisfactory character; but under the existing circumstances of her mother's state, he required her to wait another year before she asked the King's permission to enter the religious life. Still submissive, though longing for the time when all these restrictions might be removed, Louise waited on. Some papers of her own writing at this period, show the struggle between desire and resignation. ". . . I am still imploring the favour I have so long prayed for. My hopes indeed are strengthened, but they still are but hopes. I am yet in the world, far from the sheltering wings of my mother S. Teresa; nor do I see any certain way of reaching them. Yet, my God, I would persevere in unreserved submission to Thy will; I asked but to know that clearly, and if it had been contrary to my desires, I solemnly protest before heaven and earth that I would have submitted at once; I would have given up my fond hopes, and resigned myself to the position in which Thy Divine Providence thought fit to place me. But praised be Thou for ever, my God, Thou hast not despised my humble desires; Thou hast decided for me through the voice of Thy servant.* Thou hast accepted my sacrifice, and I have only to wait patiently for Thine appointed time when it may be fulfilled. I would wait, my God, with as much

* Monseigneur de Beaumont.

submission as eagerness; but Thou art willing to hear our prayers, and dost not treat our earnest petitions as rebellion, therefore Father, I dare to say, O hasten the blessed hour I long for.

“Oh, dearest mother,* join your prayers to those of her whom you must acknowledge as your child. I am in such worldly bondage here, surrounded by so much distraction; my prayers are hindered, my meditations disturbed, all my devotions interrupted; I am beset on all sides with temporal matters; the world hems me in with its pomps and vanities, its amusements, its display, its conversation, its delights, its abominations, its temptations, and I can neither fly from them, or even turn aside. My God, behold the dangers which surround me, the thorns on which I tread, my many faults, my lack of virtue; look pitifully upon my desolation, my sorrow, my weariness, and have mercy upon me; grant me the free Spirit that belongeth to the children of God.

“Have I not been sufficiently proved? Dost Thou not know the sincerity of my heart’s desire? Wilt not Thou trust my firm resolution, after so many years of constancy? Have I ever wavered for a moment? Have I not always eagerly listened to the voice which calls me, turning all my thoughts, my desires, my powers, towards it, ceaselessly longing

* S. Teresa.

for the happy moment when I may follow, and weeping sadly to see myself forced thus to wait year after year, imploring God with all the fervour and sincerity of my soul that He would break my bonds, and asking your intercession, dear mother, and that of your most favoured daughters here? Have I not seen enough of the world to detest it, and never regret it? How often I have pondered one by one over the advantages of the position I seek to renounce! Oh, my Saviour Jesus, Thou art my witness that there is not one that I hesitate to sacrifice to Thee; vain pleasures, full of bitterness they are, but were they a thousand times sweeter, I would prefer the cup of which my Saviour drank. Do not say, holy mother, that I am not yet sufficiently acquainted with your rule; I have read it incessantly, I meditate upon it, carry it about with me, delight in it. I have not deceived myself as to anything: humiliations, poverty, every kind of austerity, solitude, loneliness, contradiction, abnegation, contempt, hard usage. I have faced the worst of all, and I am afraid of nothing. I have weighed the position of a Princess against that of a Carmelite, and I have always come to the same conclusion, namely, that the Carmelite's position is best worth having, nor shall I ever change this heartfelt conviction. Oh, my Jesus, I have well weighed the cross which I

intreat Thee to lay upon me ; how far lighter it is than that which Thou didst bear.

“ Oh, dearest mother, how long must I wait ! my days and years glide by, and what shall I have at last to give to God ? Your daughters themselves will consider me too old to join them. Oh that the door of your house might be opened to me, the path made plain, the obstacles cleared away ! I need so much help in the very first step of making known my wishes to him whose consent is essential to me.* Ask a favourable opportunity for me, and that his heart may be prepared to give me a favourable hearing, that I may be strengthened against his tenderness as well as against my own, that I may have courage to speak, and may find words persuasive enough to overcome all his objections. May I be guided as to what I ought to say, how to answer him. You, my mother, won such grace in breaking the bonds which bound you to the world, and such graces are granted to your daughters now. Oh pray for me too, dearest mother, that I may be able to speak out freely, and that the King’s heart may be disposed to listen favourably to me. But how can I hope that he will hear my resolution, consent to it, and see it fulfilled, unless his heart is softened by God, unless he gives himself up to God’s will ? What happiness

* The King, her father.

could be so great as to see myself a Carmelite, and the King wholly giving himself to God! God can bring it about, and He will, dearest mother, if you ask Him. Alas! if my faith were but as strong as my wishes, He would do it even for my prayers. Oh, my God, I believe, indeed I believe! Dearest mother, offer my poor faith for me at the feet of your Divine Spouse; oh that it may grow and increase till it is as great and worthy as your own was. And then, what more could I wish, save to die a Carmelite, leaving all my family treading in the heavenward path?

“If, however, I must purchase so great graces by further delay, would that at least I may be comforted by the increasing foreshadowing of happiness, that I may see God’s will in a fuller and clearer light, and be more convinced as to my vocation; and above all that I may not waste the interval, however long it may be. I would from this moment cast aside every tie which can hinder my vocation. Alas, one’s earthly heart is so ready to attach itself to almost everything, and that almost always without one’s being aware of it—relations, friends, honour, riches, apartments, furniture, clothes, jewels, pleasant food, comforts, habits of life, human consolations—what not? I would see more clearly, and forcibly wrench myself from whatever I ought not to carry with me

to the Carmel. I would spare nothing that is of myself only, but from without I would earnestly intreat to be spared more of the heavy sorrows which have recently rent my heart. Oh, my God, preserve the Queen, give her the comfort of seeing me become one of her dear Carmelites before she dies; bless all my family; bless all whom I love, and may I only be detached from them through Thy grace. But I will not be rebellious, I will trample all my inclinations under foot that I may follow Thy voice. But whilst I am uprooting my old ties to the world, I would fain not form new attachments. Protect me in all danger, and against all snares which may beset me.

“In proportion as earthly thoughts are banished from my heart, it will be filled with thoughts of my vocation, and of heaven. May all the virtues becoming a religious grow within my soul—I would even now practise all such as far as is possible—I would seek frequent occasions of obedience, mortification, humiliation, meekness towards my inferiors, placing myself below them, and treading the world and its vanities under foot, glorifying God without any human respect, not shrinking from the shame of the Cross of Christ, publicly confessing His religion and His Church, renouncing myself and all my affections, rejoicing in contradictions, abandonment, lack of all human consolations; in cold, heat, hunger,

weariness, in renunciation of my own will, and submission to that of God; in lifting up my heart to Him, in prayer and communion with Him, in visiting His altar, feeding at His table, listening to His Word, assisting at His offices—I would multiply all such occasions, and never lose one. Everywhere, even amid the most worldly scenes, I would carry within me a crucified heart—the heart of a true Carmelite, and be worthy of our mother in every thought.

“O holy mother, I would have you ever at my side continually to bid me remember my vocation, and train myself to be a Carmelite, for time is short. I would be constantly reminded, ‘A Carmelite should think, act, or speak thus and thus;’ ‘A Carmelite should not think, do, or say so and so.’ If I could have such help, I might hope, even while in the world, to train myself to be a perfect Carmelite, to whom nothing would be wanting, save the cloister and the habit. If, then, I must yet linger in the world, be with me, holy mother, watch over me as one of your children; be my stay, my guardian, my counsellor.

“I would fain acquire a perfect knowledge of the rule, not only in my heart, but externally in my body, so that I may be able to bear all its austerities. I do not desire perfect health, I would rather resemble our holy mother in all respects. I would be like my

Divine Example, Jesus Christ, carrying His cross in my heart and in my body till my last breath.

S. Teresa's motto '*Ou souffrir, ou mourir*,' shall be mine too. But I would pray that amidst suffering and weakness my constitution may be strengthened, so that my vocation be not hindered by weakness, if by God's Mercy all other obstacles are removed. But while I consider my future life, and strive to practise its virtues, I would beware of neglecting the duties of that position where God's Providence keeps me at present, for however short a time it may be, I would be faithful to those duties, fulfilling them with as much care and perfection as if all my life was to go on as it now is. I would do more good in my present position—good of a kind which I shall be unable to do when in the cloister. Alas, what have I done hitherto in correspondence with God's views for me, or in return for His having placed me for so many years in my present exalted position? Oh, my God, fill such few days as I am yet to spend therein with the abundance of Thy grace, and may that fullness atone for the emptiness of my past life. Give me grace, during the remaining brief time, to serve religion, the Church, and the State, to succour the sorrowful, to sustain, to rekindle, and encourage piety, to protect helpless innocence, to silence slander

and calumny, to win all my household to Thy service, to be a source of edification at Court, and before I retire to seek my own salvation, help me to set forward that of all those before whose notice my elevated position inevitably places me. May it so be."

CHAPTER II.

MADAME LOUISE'S prayers that her Royal mother might live to see her a Carmelite were not granted ; the gentle Queen continued to fade away, and having spoken a last farewell and blessing to her daughter, she departed this life, surrounded with the consolations of religion which had sustained her till that moment, and did not fail her then. Madame Louise felt her mother's loss most keenly, but having watched the Queen during so many years of unostentatious piety, and of sufferings, patiently and lovingly borne, she believed firmly that for her "to die was gain," and now she no longer scrupled to pour out her whole heart and confidence to the beloved one, who seemed nearer than while yet in this world.

Each day did but increase the Princess's longing to quit the world, and nothing now was required to enable her to do so, save the King's consent. It was

not judged fit to ask this consent for more than a year after the Queen's death, but then, at last, the Archbishop of Paris announced to Madame Louise that her long term of waiting was over, and that no further delay was required before asking the King's consent to follow her vocation. The Princess had long been ready to forsake all her worldly ties; rank and its privileges were as nothing to her; but her warm affectionate heart could not quit the relations she loved without a pang, and when it became an actual question of informing the King of her intentions, she shrank from attempting to do it herself. Monseigneur de Beaumont undertook to make the communication, and was accordingly admitted to a private audience. The Archbishop went straight to his point. "Sire," he said, "I am commissioned to acquaint your Majesty with intelligence which I am sure you will receive with your wonted piety. Madame Louise, after long and serious consideration, is convinced that God calls her to embrace the religious life, and she requests your Majesty to make her happy by permitting her to follow her vocation." Apparently Louis XV. was not prepared for the request; he drew back in amazement, and exclaimed bitterly, "What! such intelligence as this! and you the bearer, Monseigneur?" and then, leaning on the back of an arm-chair, his head buried in his hands,

he added, "This is cruel ! cruel indeed !" But after a short silence, the King turned to the venerable prelate, saying, "If God requires it of me, Archbishop, I neither can nor will resist His Will. I will give my answer in a fortnight." This fortnight's delay was most intensely trying to Madame Louise ; she felt keenly for her father's grief, and struggled hard with many conflicting feelings. All through the fortnight, the King never saw his daughter Louise alone ; they only met at the usual hours when the other Princesses were present, and nothing was said in allusion to the subject which so engrossed her thoughts, but every evening, when the time for separation came, the King used to look lovingly and sadly at his youngest daughter, only turning hastily away in time to stop his tears from overflowing. Then Madame Louise would hasten to her oratory, and kneeling there before the Crucifix, pour out her soul in prayer that her father's sorrow and her own in parting might be accepted in union with the great Sacrifice of the Cross, and that both their hearts might be more and more filled with perfect submission to the Will of God.

When the fortnight's end came, Louis XV. sent for the Abbé du Ternay, Madame Louise's confessor, and gave him the following letter which carried his decision to his daughter :—

“VERSAILLES, *February 16, 1770.*

“MY DEAR DAUGHTER,—The Archbishop having told me all that you had said to him, will doubtless have conveyed my answer with equal exactitude. If you are acting for God only, I cannot oppose His will, or your determination. During eighteen years, you must have made all due reflections; I cannot ask you to consider the subject more. Indeed, it appears that your arrangements are made. You may speak of it to your sisters whenever you see fit. Compiègne is out of the question, but you may decide upon any other place, and I should be very sorry to prescribe anything as to that matter. I have made forced sacrifices; this will be a voluntary sacrifice on your part. God will give you strength to endure your new life, for the step once taken, there is no coming back. I embrace you heartily, dear daughter, and give you my blessing. LOUIS.”

Many tears were shed over this letter, and many prayers offered by the Princess, that she might do nothing but what was acceptable in God's Sight, and that she might in no way hinder the salvation of her father, the object of her most earnest and intense longings. The next consideration was, which Carmelite convent should be selected as her future

home. Not unnaturally, the Princess's inclination was for that in the Rue de Grenelle, where she had first clearly received her vocation, and where she had at the present time several friends; but several considerations arose in her mind to hinder this choice, one being the fear lest the attraction of personal friendship might in any degree mingle with a step which should be taken solely with a view to God. Moreover, Madame Louise rightly foresaw that if she belonged to any community in Paris, she would have far more visitors than would be consistent with the life she proposed to follow. The King's visits were always announced by the firing of cannon, and the future nun thought that this salute would be a sad distraction to the community, every time that her father came to see her. But in spite of all this, her inclination to the Rue de Grenelle was still strong, and wishing to be advised on the subject, she sent for the Superior of that house, the Abbé Leger, Curé of S. André des Arcs. The answer to her summons was, that the Abbé Leger was so infirm, that if it was indispensable for Madame Louise to see him, he must be carried to her apartment. This would have been a more public proceeding than the Princess liked, and having ascertained that the Abbé Bertin was Superior of the Carmelites of S. Denis, she sent for him to assist her with his advice.

The Abbé Bertin was at Versailles, and he immediately went to the Princess, who begged him to be seated, as she wanted to have a somewhat detailed conversation with him. But, with her usual impetuous rapidity, she decided before going further that the monastery of S. Denis should be her home, so that her conversation with the Abbé began with the announcement, "I am going to be a Carmelite, and I am coming to the convent of S. Denis, where you are Superior. I want your permission to go there, and I want to go there without delay."

The Abbé Bertin was lost in amazement. The monastery of S. Denis was at this time in a state of great temporal need, and the Reverend Mothers of that house knew not what was to become of them unless it should please God to send them some unexpected help. Their worthy Superior had shared all their anxieties, without seeing any definite prospect of relief, and now he suddenly found a Daughter of France offering herself as a postulant, her rank and influence being the probable means of restoration of the house, if indeed she entered it. But, being appealed to as Superior, the Abbé felt bound to examine into a vocation, which, for aught he knew, might be as recent an idea to the Princess as to himself. "It appears to me," he said, "that a project involving such weighty consequences for Madame

should undergo the most deliberate and serious reflections."

"So I think, M. l'Abbé, but I have been making all this serious reflection for the last eighteen years, during which my religious vocation has been hindered, without the smallest change arising in me."

"This long trial, Madame, is a great proof in favour of your vocation, but I cannot venture to decide without further counsel upon a step which is likely to make so great a stir as this."

"Do not be afraid, M. l'Abbé, those whom God has set over me for the last eighteen years, have approved of my intentions. At this moment I have the sanction of my chief pastor, the Archbishop of Paris. Indeed, it is quite time that I carried out my intention. My best years are slipping by, and I have no need of any further deliberation."

"I must acknowledge that Madame may consider those good and enlightened men who have directed her conscience, as worthy interpreters of God's Will; especially I must grant that the opinion of Monseigneur the Archbishop of Paris leaves us no doubt as to your vocation for the religious life. But in order to pursue this vocation, Madame, one thing is imperatively necessary, and I doubt your obtaining it easily; I mean, the King's consent."

"Oh yes, M. l'Abbè, I have his consent. I can

scarcely think of what it cost him without crying, but religion prevailed over natural affection, and he consents to my becoming a nun, and a Carmelite; he allows me to go where I will, except to Compiègne, and I want to come to S. Denis."

"It is quite possible, Madame, to have a very genuine vocation for the religious life, and yet not to be called to the extraordinary hard life of the Carmelites. Madame might, for instance, join the less austere Order of the Benedictines, an Order with which you are well acquainted."

"Yes, M. l'Abbé, I must tell you that I did not conceal my attraction to the religious life from Madame de Soutlanges, but I pointed out to her, and she entirely agreed with me, that my great affection for her might lead to a somewhat too earthly feeling in the sacrifice, if I joined her Order. Besides, as my object in becoming a nun is not to command, but to obey, and to work out my own salvation, I should be sorry to expose myself to the annoyance of refusing abbeys, or to the temptation of accepting them."

"Still without joining an order wherein you would be called to high offices, you might, Madame, choose one where the less severe régime would be more suitable to your delicate constitution and to the life you have led hitherto; for in truth the contrast between the Court and the Carmel is too great."

“I am aware of that, M. l'Abbé, and on account of my delicate health I had once thought of joining S. Francis de Sales' daughters, but his Order undertakes the education of children, and for that I feel quite unfit. But when God calls us, ought we not to reckon more on His Grace, than on our own natural strength? My health is but indifferent here, no one need be surprised if it is indifferent when I join the Carmelites.”

“But, Madame, the Carmelite Order is so exceedingly austere; those who join it bind themselves to fasting for the greater part of the year, habitual and ill-cooked *maigre*, entire solitude, unlimited obedience, continual prayer and labour.”

“I know all that, M. l'Abbé, and a great deal more too. I have studied the Constitutions of S. Teresa deliberately, and I hope that God will give me grace to practise them. I have already made some satisfactory attempts in that direction, and I shall still further have the novitiate as a test; the King requires that my novitiate should be three months longer than the ordinary time.”

“I see clearly that Madame is determined to be a daughter of S. Teresa. May I venture to make some remarks as to the special house which she proposes to join? since, as Superior, I know it better than any one else can do. This house has

not the advantages, in its buildings, which many others have, and its temporal affairs are at the lowest ebb."

"So much the better, M. l'Abbé, it will be a pleasure to me to help to reinstate it, and if I bring no great personal virtues, at all events I may bring the advantage of the King's love for me."

"But this is not all, Madame; the house of S. Denis is not only the poorest in France, but also the strictest; it is not merely faithful to the Constitutions, but sundry pious practices are in use there among the nuns, which are observed nowhere else. In short, Madame, S. Denis is called 'la Trappe du Carmel.'"

"Once more, M. l'Abbé, I answer, so much the better; for I have always been afraid lest I should fall into a house where the rule was relaxed, and I ought to thank God for thus fulfilling my wish by bringing me to S. Denis. My good angel must have prompted me in my choice."

"It is impossible for me to entertain any further doubt as to Madame's vocation being the work of God; and I shall only be too happy if I can promote your views. But in order to this I must suggest that it is indispensable to have the King's written consent, before we can open the monastery door to you."

"This fresh request will renew all the King's grief;

will not his verbal consent, which he will certainly not retract, suffice?"

"No, Madame, that would not be enough to put us out of the reach of any blame. We are bound to require every postulant to bring her parents' written consent, and you can judge, Madame, whether we could omit so wise a rule where the King's daughter is a postulant."

"Well, M. l'Abbé, if this written consent is necessary, I will not come to S. Denis without it."

The King had gone to Choisy, and Madame Louise wrote to him there, asking for his written consent to her joining the Carmelites of S. Denis. Louis XV. sent her the required permission, with the following note:—

"*April 5th, 1770.*—I embrace you with all my heart, my dear child, and send the order you require for your departure. I will do all you wish about your servants, and your other arrangements; I can only send you a line to-night, mon petit cœur, for it is late."

As soon as the Princess had received this letter she sent again for the Abbé Bertin, and gave him the royal act empowering him to receive her, upon which it was settled that she should go to S. Denis on the following Wednesday, April 11th. "My wish is," she said, "that you should only tell the nuns that morning that I am coming to hear mass in their choir;

I will arrange so as to be at the convent door at half-past nine—if I get earlier to S. Denis, I will go and pray by the Queen's grave. When mass is over, I will stay before the Blessed Sacrament, while you summon the nuns together to tell them why I came amongst them." The Abbé Bertin asked what arrangements the Princess wished to have made for lodging her? She replied that she wanted nothing more than an ordinary cell, such as all the nuns occupied. But as she was accustomed to very broad easy stairs, she begged that if there were no balustrades to those she would have to use at S. Denis, a cord might be put up, as she still trod with a careless step. Consequently upon these arrangements, the Abbé Bertin went to S. Denis, where, as he did not say a word about Madame Louise, he astonished the good nuns not a little by some of the orders which he gave. He took one of the King's architects to the house, and made him inspect all the buildings, with the intention (which however was not mentioned) of arranging an apartment where Louis XV. might be received. The community looked on in amazement, which increased when the Superior inquired into the rules which permitted the occasional admission of ladies into the convent, as a temporary residence; they began to fear that some secular benefactress was to be sent among them, and that the relief

thereby afforded to their temporal necessities would also tend to the relaxation of their rule, and so prove more loss than gain. Next, the Abbé Bertin ordered balustrades to be put to all the staircases; and he desired that the cider which was at present used out of economy, should be replaced by wine. The *dépositaire* (or bursar) was quite willing to obey (though she and the Prioress were both of opinion that the order exceeded all bounds of reason), but as the cellar was well filled with cider, and there was no money in the house, she ventured upon some mild remonstrance, which, however, was totally unheeded by the Superior. Finally, the Abbé required a still more incomprehensible act of obedience from his spiritual daughters. Almost the only source of income left to them was the rent of an external apartment which was let to the Vicomtesse de Cheylas, and M. Bertin desired them to give up their tenant, and, as it seemed to them, voluntarily to lose their last resource. The poor nuns were aghast! Nothing but their spirit of obedience could have carried them through so severe a trial of their faith in their Superior; but of course all his commands were obeyed, and before long they were rewarded for their submission. On the Wednesday in Holy Week, April 11th, 1770, after early mass, the Abbé Bertin assembled the community and gave them an instruc-

tion upon the soul's self-abandonment to the dealings of God's Providence, at the conclusion of which he told the nuns that Madame Louise was coming to hear the next mass in choir, and that she wished to be received without any ceremony. Just at this moment, the sound of a carriage was heard ; it was Madame Louise, who, knowing that her Royal sisters were quite unconscious of her intentions of becoming a Carmelite, as also that they would oppose such intentions, had determined to leave Versailles without any leave-taking ; and accordingly saying no more than that she was going to S. Denis to visit her mother's grave, she took her departure in her ordinary Court attire, attended only by one lady in waiting and an equerry, and thus quietly and unostentatiously the important step which severed the Princess from her Court life for ever was taken.

Even while the Abbé Bertin was discoursing the good nuns and preparing them for their royal visitor, Madame Louise's carriage had entered the convent court, and with her usual briskness and rapidity, she had alighted, and asked admittance. The *tourière*, a certain *Sœur Marianne*, was not accustomed to open her door so readily ; she had no notion who the visitor was, and only answered, "Ah ! *mademoiselle*, our mothers do not admit visitors in that

way! and, besides, they are in the parloir with the Superior. Who do you want to see?"

Madame Louise was insisting on the necessity for her immediate admittance, when the Abbé Bertin came to the rescue, and promised that she should enter directly; but the Princess could scarcely endure the delay, she feared every instant lest some of her family should have followed her and with mistaken affection strive to hinder her entrance into the haven she had so long sought. "I can bear witness to the rigid inclosure of your spiritual daughters," she said to M. Bertin. "Why, I can scarcely get in, even with your express orders, and in your own presence!" At last the door was opened, and the nuns received the Princess within the shelter of their walls. After the first greetings were over, she requested to speak alone at the tour to Madame de Chistel, her lady in waiting, and to her equerry, M. de Quincerot; the purport of this interview being to tell them that she had come to S. Denis in order to be a Carmelite, and that she was not going away again. Then came a scene: Madame de Chistel began to shriek, which brought the tourières running in to see what was the matter. The lady in waiting ended by fainting, but the equerry carried the astounding news without, and there was a general hubbub and commotion,

which must have been very vexatious to the good nuns, who in no way comprehended the cause. At last the Mère Eléonore, whose office of *dépositaire* took her to the parloir to assist in restoring Madame de Chistel, gathered some idea of what was happening, and she went in great haste to the Prioress, to announce her suspicions. "Oh ! Mère Eléonore, surely such a thing is not possible !" exclaimed the Mère Anne de Saint Alexis—then Prioress. "Doubtless all things are possible with God ; but this ! Oh no, do not let us dream of it !"

Meanwhile the lady in waiting recovered from her swoon, and fell into a more inconvenient and troublesome attack of violent complaints and reproaches, accusing the Princess of ingratitude, selfishness, and what not ! She declared that Madame Louise had eloped from Court, and that she, Madame de Chistel, would be blamed as confidante and accomplice ! She protested that she could never dare to see the King or the Princesses again, and that she must fly from the Court for ever ! The equerry took her view of the matter, and they persisted in affirming that Madame Louise had deceived them. It was a painful scene, but the Princess was on the right side of the door, and when she could say no more to reconcile her attendants to what was inevitable, she silenced them by producing a written order from the King,

which put an end to the discussion. This order (which is still preserved in the family of M. d'Haran-guier de Quincerot, the equerry), was as follows :—

“The ladies who may attend my daughter Louise when she goes to the convent, where she wishes to retire with my consent and permission, are to obey her in whatever she may command them, as they would obey me myself; and the officer on guard, the gardes-du-corps, and equerries are to do the like.

“(Signed) — LOUIS.

“VERSAILLES, *April 6, 1770.*”

Of course this settled the question, but it by no means reconciled Madame de Chistel and M. de Quincerot to the necessity they were under of returning to Versailles without their royal mistress, notwithstanding the letters to her sisters and to other members of the Court, which Madame Louise offered to write in explanation—and at last they departed, very much aggrieved and disconcerted, to carry the unlooked-for news back to Court.

This trying scene over, the members of the community were brought to pay their respects to the Princess, still ignorant of the real object of her visit. After saying a few words to each nun, Madame Louise addressed the Prioress, “Your community seems to be but small?”

"It is small, Madame, and for a very good reason."

"May I ask the reason?" "Madame, we are exceedingly poor." "Have you any novices?" "No, Madame, for several years we have had none." "Or any postulants?" "We have two postulants." "Are they old?" "One is very young, the other is forty, they are coming here this very day." "To-day? How very fortunate; I love the Carmelites so much, and I should like to bring you good fortune by coming to see you."

"The honour of Madame's visit is great good fortune for us in itself."

"We must hope that more members will join you, and that your house will be restored."

"At our worst times, Madame, we have never mistrusted God's good Providence for an instant."

"You say well; His Providence is unfailing to all those who trust Him. But, Mesdames, it is time for mass, and I wish to assist at it with you. Pray do not put yourselves to the least inconvenience for me; let everything be done as usual, and do not give me a thought, save by praying for me; if any of you are about to communicate at this mass, I would beg you to receive *à mon intention*."

While the community was assembling in the choir, Madame Louise asked to speak to the Abbé Bertin in the parloir, where she intreated him to

impress upon the nuns that she wished to follow their rule absolutely, without any exemptions. This done, she took her place in the choir, refusing at once the prie-dieu prepared for her as a guest. During mass, her tears flowed freely ; but she herself said that they were tears of joy and gratitude, at having attained the grace she had so long desired, more than anything else. Some natural feelings of shrinking from the life of mortification before her intermingled with the Princess's joy, but they were accepted as part of the sacrifice she willingly offered to God, and as such, they were meekly borne. Mass was celebrated by the Abbé Douzanville, chaplain to the convent ; he knew why the Princess had come to S. Denis, and was much touched both by her self-devotion, and by the prospect of relief to the little community to which he ministered. Several times the good priest's voice faltered in the service, and all the nuns assisted with more than usual fervour, which was not the usual result of a visit from royalty, the tendency of such visits being rather to disturb the otherwise peaceful inmates of the Carmel.

Mass ended, Madame Louise was left, as pre-arranged, to her devotions in the choir, while the Superior, M. Bertin, once more assembled the community in the parloir, this time to tell them of the real intentions with which the Princess had come to

S. Denis, and of her earnest desire to come amongst her future sisters on terms of perfect equality, forgetting her royal birth, and everything, save that she, with them, was the daughter of S. Teresa. The amazement and delight of the nuns was unbounded; especially that of the Prioress, on whom the chief burden and responsibility fell, with respect to the temporal affairs of the house—affairs, which, as has been already said, were at a very low ebb. The present Prioress, the Mother Anne de S. Alexis, was no longer young; she had been a Carmelite for forty-two years, most of which had been spent in hard work for the houses to which she had been sent, and she was well used to anxiety and self-sacrifice. She was Irish by nation, her father, one Mr Matthew Creag, having followed the exiled King James II. of England to France, before the birth of this child. At the present time the Mother Anne de S. Alexis was for the second time Prioress of the house at S. Denis, having been re-elected about a year before. The new hopes now raised with respect to her charge, filled her with overpowering gratitude, and she could at first scarcely gather together her scattered thoughts, and obey the Father Superior, who sent her to the choir to fetch the Princess, as he had previously promised to do. Madame Louise, who was waiting her summons, rose up quickly, and they

went silently together to the parloir, where, on entering, the Princess immediately knelt down, and made her little speech to the assembled nuns. "I beg you all, Mesdames, to be so good as to receive me among you, and to look upon me as your sister, forgetting what I have been in the world, except by praying for the King and for me. I wish with all my heart to be a Carmelite, and I will try, by the help of God's Grace and of your prayers, to become a good Carmelite." The nuns all wept with joy and astonishment; the Prioress raised Madame Louise, kissing her hands respectfully, and in return Madame Louise embraced her and all the nuns, asking if they feared to have her, since they wept so freely? and then turning to the grille, near which the Superior stood much moved also, she exclaimed, "I do believe, M. le Superieur, that you too are crying!"

Wishing to put an end to this scene, the Prioress began to speak to her royal aspirant, addressing her as "Madame;" but the Princess broke in upon her at once, "Pray do not call me so, Reverend Mother! I know that your postulants are not called 'Madame,' but 'Sister;' and I intreat you to remember that I wish heartily and irrevocably to cast aside all my old worldly distinctions. When I deserve a mortification, you will do well to mark it by calling me 'Madame.' But does not a Carmelite change her

worldly name when she comes in here?" "What name would you wish to take, Madame?" inquired the Abbé Bertin? "Any name which will not recall my position in the world, will be the same to me," was the reply. "If I had a choice, I should like the name of Teresa, but I could not take it from any one in the house who bears it already; and besides, I ought not to have a will of my own in that or anything else; so I shall readily adopt any name you please to give me."

"Since Madame is about to become the Teresa of France, I think she should be known by that name," the Prioress answered; "will you take in addition that of S. Augustin?" "I have a great devotion to S. Augustin, but I should never have thought of asking to adopt his name; will you tell me, Reverend Mother, why you propose to give it me?"

"Because it is the name of our Superior, and we have always intended to give it to the first postulant brought to us by him." "Am I then the Abbé's first daughter here?" "Yes, Madame." "Then it is certainly only fair that I should bear his name, but how are the two names to go together?"

"Nothing could be easier, Madame, you will be Térèse de S. Augustin." "That is charming—here I am then, Sœur Térèse de S. Augustin."

Vesper time had now arrived. Madame Louise

assisted at the service, and then joined recreation, which was appointed to go on as usual by the Superior, although, being Holy Week, there would have been no recreation in the ordinary course of things. The Princess was rather distressed at finding herself placed beside the Prioress, and addressed as "Madame," for the nuns could not all at once forget their new sister's rank. During recreation, she inquired if the postulants of whom she had been told had arrived yet. The Prioress replied that one only, the younger of the two, Mademoiselle de Saint Germain, had arrived, and they were waiting for the other, so as to open their doors but once for both. The mention of these postulants set the good mothers pondering whether they ought not to delay receiving the new inmates, until it was certain that they were fit companions for the Princess. Madame Louise guessed their thoughts, and expressed her astonishment that they should feel any embarrassment. "Surely," she said, "such considerations are contrary to the spirit of S. Teresa. I beg that you will not think so much of me, but let me at once become acquainted with this postulant whom God gives me as my companion." The nuns complied, somewhat relieved to find that they were not likely to be called upon to relax their rule for their royal postulant, and the new comer was brought in. Madame Louise

embraced her immediately, saying, "I must make much of you as my first companion." The Prioress asked Madame Louise to select a name for Made-moiselle de Saint Germain, and she chose that of Adelaïde. The first time that the Princesses came to visit her at S. Denis, she presented her companion to them as "My Sister Adelaïde."

The day wore on. Madame Louise wrote a few consolatory lines to her Royal father, which the Abbé Bertin took charge of on his return to Versailles; she joined in all the offices, and the nuns, who studiously avoided saying anything which might recall painful thoughts as to her family or home, were surprised to hear her allude cheerfully and calmly to them as occasion offered. It was true that she had some natural yearnings after those she had voluntarily left for ever, but when the thought of her beloved ones pressed too tenderly on her heart, she strove rather to dwell upon her more real power of helping them in spiritual things as a Religious, and found comfort in the hope. Madame Louise was not allowed to attend the self-examination which took place at eight o'clock, and the Prioress, knowing how tired she must be with the long day of so new and exciting a kind, insisted on her going to bed. It was the first time the Princess had ever undressed herself, or even, so rigid was Court etiquette, gone to her bedroom with-

out the attendance of an equerry. The Sœur Julie (an Irishwoman in family, like the Prioress, Julienne de Mac-Mahon), was appointed to act the part of "angel," in other words, temporary guardian and protectress to the Princess. She was in some measure acquainted with the ordinary habits of Court life, and guessed how strange the new postulant would feel in their sudden and total abandonment. Accordingly, the good Sister conducted Madame Louise to the infirmary, where she was to sleep, and assisted at the royal toilette. No provision had been made for this, and the Princess meekly remarked that she supposed, amid the general consternation caused at Versailles by her departure, her bedchamber women had forgotten to send her toilette apparatus. "Perhaps," she added, "the portress would borrow a night-cap for me from one of the tourières, for I suppose I may not wear the nun's veil."

Madame Louise wanted to begin at once to sleep upon the hard straw mattress used by the nuns, but the Prioress was inflexible on this point in spite of intreaties, and Madame Louise was forced to submit. However, all the rest of her furniture was the same as that used by the other members of the house, and strangely unfamiliar it must have seemed to one used to the luxury of Versailles. Before going to bed, the Princess wrote a short letter to a lady at

Court, in whom she had great confidence. "Everything here is as bright as heaven," she said, "I have just left recreation, where I was dying of laughter, although I had received some very touching letters. You see how a good conscience can cheer the most tender hearts, for, indeed, mine is and always will be very tender, but my consolation is that the reward will be so much the greater."

So Madame Louise lay down to rest for the first time where she had longed for so many years to be, in a Carmelite convent, and in spite of her narrow bed, her tourière's night-cap, and all the agitations and novelties of the day past, she slept soundly for six hours, without regretting Versailles.

CHAPTER III.

MEANWHILE, the Court was in a great state of consternation; everybody had something to say on the subject, and the Princess's household wept as though she were dead. Madame de Chistel delivered the letters she had brought from Madame Louise to her sisters, in which she begged them to forgive her for having left Versailles so secretly in order to spare them pain. That same evening, they sent little notes to S. Denis.

"You can guess better than I can tell you," so Madame Adelaïde wrote, "all that I am feeling. My grief is as great as my astonishment, but if you are happy, I ask no more. Pray for me, *mon cher cœur*, you know my needs, which are greater than ever now. I shall come and see you as soon as ever I can if you like to receive me. Adieu, *mon cher cœur*. I am going to hear Tenebræ (it was Holy

Week), though I fear I shall be rather distraite. Always love me, and be sure that I love you dearly.

“ADELAÏDE.”

Madame Sophie wrote, “I never talked again about your notion of becoming a nun, because I thought it was merely a fancy which you would never carry out. But I entirely forgive you for not telling me anything. Yours is a noble sacrifice, because it is voluntary, but do not suppose that ours, which is involuntary, is less hard to bear when you leave us. But it is God’s Will. Be sure, *mon cher cœur*, that I love you, and shall love you all my life, and that I shall long to come and see you whenever you will let me. *Je t’embrasse de tout mon cœur.* SOPHIE.”

Madame Victoire, in her anxiety about her sister, wrote also to the Prioress and the mistress of the novices, begging that they would frequently let her hear how Madame Louise was. “She is very delicate, especially her chest, and often spits blood, and I fear that her zeal will be greater than her strength. I have no doubt but that you will take great care of her, and though she will not like to submit, I hope you will remember that you are her Superioress. It is a bitter separation to me, I can only bear it for God’s sake, saying, ‘Fiat Voluntas Tua.’ . . . I

think His Will is marked in it. . . . Pray, take pity on me, and give me the minutest details concerning Louise's health, and hide nothing from me."

On Maundy Thursday, as King Louis came away from mass, the Abbé Bertin gave him the letter which Madame Louise had sent to her father the evening before. After a long conversation with the Abbé, the King wrote as follows to his daughter:—

"VERSAILLES, *April 12, 1770.*

"MY VERY DEAR DAUGHTER,—M. l'Abbé Bertin gave me your letter after service, and I have had a long talk with him. I have obeyed you, although I am your superior in more ways than one, and now, it is your turn to obey the Superioress of the community you have chosen for your retreat; the Abbé Bertin speaks well of her, and of all the religious in that house; she will do well to spare you in the first beginnings, so that you may be able to go on and achieve the purpose you set before yourself in leaving us. Be sure of my affection, dear Louise, or Sœur Térèse de Saint Augustin. My health is good, my night was rather restless, and my morning visit to your sisters not so pleasant as usual. LOUIS."

That day, by the King's orders, M. de Choiseul,

the Secretary of State, wrote to announce Madame Louise's retirement from the world officially to all the European Courts. The announcement is couched as follows :—

“The deep and enduring piety of Madame Louise, the King's daughter, has inspired her with the project of joining the Carmelites. She has tested her vocation while yet at Court, and having obtained the King's consent, she yesterday entered a monastery of that Order at S. Denis, where she proposes to make her profession as a simple religious, leaving absolutely whatever appertains to the world or its dignities. The King desires me to announce this exemplary and touching event to you.

“DUC DE CHOISEUL, Ministre.”

The Maundy Thursday communion of the whole house was offered for Madame Louise's vocation. During that day, the royal postulant had to receive a great many visitors, beginning with the Pope's Nunzio, who presented her with a rosary, blessed by the Holy Father. Madame Louise had already entered into the spirit of poverty, which forbids a religious to possess anything as her own, and before receiving this gift, she went to ask permission of the Prioress to accept it. Next came the Bishop of Cydon, Visitor of the Carmelite Order in France, and

then the Abbé du Ternay, Madame Louise's own confessor. Faithful to her spirit of total self-abnegation, she had expressed no wish on this subject, but was prepared to accept whoever might be assigned to her as her confessor. But the Superior, Abbé Bertin, not unnaturally thought that the director who had led the Princess to so high a perfection while at Court, would be fitter than any stranger to guide her in the narrow path upon which she was now entering. He had therefore decided on giving Madame Louise the consolation of continuing in the hands of the Abbé du Ternay, and had arranged for that priest to come to S. Denis, and reside henceforward in the apartment which had been occupied by Madame de Cheylas. This was a great comfort to Madame Louise, who thus continued under her own confessor as long as he lived.

Severe as the Carmelite rule always is, it was of course more so than usual in this, the Holy Week. On Good Friday, the community took no food save a little bread and water, which was eaten as they sat upon the ground. Madame Louise would fain have done the same, but the Prioress refused to allow this, and she was obliged to eat a maigre soup and some lentils, sitting on a bench and making a table of her lap.

On Easter Eve the venerable Archbishop of Paris

came to see Madame Louise, and rejoice with her over the accomplishment of her wishes, which he had thought it his duty to restrain for so many years. During Easter Day, the Paris pulpits re-echoed with the subject, and so unusual an event as the retirement from the world of a Daughter of France was looked upon as an important augury of good to the Church and religion.* Letters of congratulation and encouragement poured in upon the postulant; among others, one from the Princess's former confessor, the R. Père de Beauvais, a Jesuit now at Dijon, who had watched the first growth of her vocation, and was able to rejoice with her in its perfection. ". . . . If your Order is proud of the honour of possessing you," he says, "I hope you will never forget how much you gain on your side. You, Madame, gain the hundredfold reward promised by our Master to those who leave all to follow Him; and, moreover, you gain countless benefits in the help, the examples, the special graces, and the interior peace which are found in a life hidden from the world, and filled solely with the love of Jesus. May you, Madame,

* The Bishop of Cydon, as Visitor of the Order, addressed a letter to all the Carmelite houses in France, announcing the fact, and requesting all professed nuns to offer their communions on behalf of the Princess, that she might have grace to complete her self-oblation.

drink deeply of this honour and happiness so far beyond all else. The honours and happiness which you are forsaking would have forsaken you when the hour of death comes ; but these are a foretaste and pledge of the joys prepared for such as love God and seek to possess Him above all things."

Some of the childish letters of Madame Louise's nephews and nieces are touching, in their mixed formality and simplicity. One of the young princes, the Comte de Provence, expresses his fear that his aunt "will not be able to endure the rigours of her new life without feeling inconvenienced ;" and another, the Comte d'Artois, announces, that the next day he is to make his First Communion, and begs her prayers. Madame Clotilde says, "My dear aunt, I cannot tell you how unhappy I am at your going to S. Denis. The thought that I shall very seldom see you makes me shiver, only I hope they will let me go sometimes, and that I shall have the great pleasure of seeing you ; it will be the greatest pleasure they can give me. The King has promised that we shall sup with him in his *petits cabinets* next Tuesday ; but it will not be so nice, dear aunt, now that you will not be there. I am to make my First Communion that same day. Pray, dear aunt, ask God that I may make it worthily. As for me, I shall certainly fulfil your commission and pray for you, though I really

don't think you have any need of it. I do love you, and embrace you with all my heart, dearest aunt.

“MARIE ADELAÏDE CLOTHILDE XAVIERE.

“My sister bids me say that she shares all my love to you. *Petite chère amie** hardly dares ask me to place her at your feet, full of respect and admiration.”

The King wrote frequently to his daughter ; on one occasion she appealed to him, to enjoin upon her Sisters not to treat her as a Princess, calling her *Madame*, placing her by the Prioress, giving her precedence at the altar, and appropriating a prie-dieu and a square of carpet to her use in the choir, which, however, she always declined to use. In reply, Louis XV. writes :—

“VERSAILLES, *April 17, 1770.*

“I received your letter, my dear child, as I left mass : your letters can never be troublesome to me, so long as I only have to answer them when it is possible. It is difficult to forget who you are, and you cannot be treated as if you had been picked up out of the streets. After the first time, the carpet is

* A pet name for Madame de Marsan, the princess's governess.

order literally, especially the words, "*sans se déranger*;" and the next morning she was found in exactly the same position as that in which she had gone to rest! The object of relieving her fatigue was not attained, for the poor Princess was forced to confess that she had passed a most uncomfortable night, but in her desire to learn obedience, she had restrained every movement. Another arrangement which was intended as an alleviation of the strictness of Carmelite rule, helped to increase the Princess's physical discomfort. Her health being delicate, the Abbé Bertin judged it inexpedient to allow her to begin with keeping the severe abstinence observed in the house, and he accordingly settled with the Prioress that for a time the new postulant should, among other indulgences, be provided daily with a dish of fish. The poor Princess detested fish, and, moreover, she ardently desired to do the same as her companions did; but she knew that it was reasonable to take some precautions as to her health, if she hoped to be able to continue the life set before her, so she bravely swallowed both her aversion and her fish, never telling her Superiors how much she disliked it until the time came when she was allowed to leave off eating it as an indulgence. Madame Louise's cell was precisely the same as that of the other nuns; its furniture, besides the hard bed already spoken of, consisted

of a chair, a bench which could be used as a table, a bénitier (or vessel for holy water), a Crucifix, and three pictures. A letter from one of the nuns, *Sœur Térèse des Chèrubins* to one of her relations, a Benedictine Father, written shortly after Madame Louise's entrance at S. Denis, alludes to these details :—"Madame makes a point of accepting all our practices, and adopts all our ways and habits with a grace which enhances her merit. . . . She does not mind our food, any more than our straw mattress or our serge sheets, although really hers, being new, are almost as hot as blankets. She says that when she wakes in the morning, and remembers that she is among the Carmelites, she can scarce contain herself for joy. When we want to let her take precedence in entering the choir or elsewhere, she stops short, and says pleasantly, 'I am not Madame Louise any longer, I am called *Sœur Térèse de S. Augustin*.' She takes everything as easily and cheerfully as if she had been here all her life ; really her goodness, her courage, and amiability are wonderful. . . . If she were neither a Princess or as good as she is, one could not help liking her for the charms of her manner and mind ; she is the life of our recreations, and makes us laugh so much, that sometimes I am quite exhausted. Her humility is so great that we are obliged to be on the watch

not to annoy her by any special deference to her birth and refinement ; she not only treats us all with kindness and affection, but she will embrace our lay sisters, saying that they too are her sisters like the rest."

In spite of all her efforts to become a thorough Carmelite at once, the habits of a life would sometimes for a moment resume their power, and Sœur Térèse would become Madame Louise again. But the moment she was conscious of having said or done anything which savoured of the Princess rather than the nun, she would blush with shame, and treating this very natural result of her old ways of living as showing an unworthy pride, she would kneel down before the nuns, and ask their pardon for her unintentional offence, much to their distress, who were all the time only marvelling how one so long accustomed to the deference and attention of courtiers, could so readily submit to the religious yoke. From the first Sœur Térèse took her natural place with the postulants, accepting the various obediences and mortifications that were their special portion, as her right. At first the Superiors tried to conceal from her certain customs and practices from which they intended to dispense her, as being too sudden a change from her past life ; but the Princess had studied the rule so diligently before leaving

Versailles, that they soon found it impossible to deceive her. She knew all the points of a postulant's duty as well as they did, and insisted on taking her due share of sweeping and cleaning, lighting the lamps, ringing the bells, or whatever humble office it might be her turn to fulfil. One of these tasks was to clean all the candlesticks used in the house. Perhaps the attempts made at Versailles to endure the smell of tallow, had enabled the Princess to undertake this unpleasant labour with less disgust than she would have otherwise experienced; but nevertheless her face probably expressed some uneasiness, for one of the Sisters during the week in which it fell to Madame Louise's share, touched at the sight of the royal lady performing a work from which she herself revolted, obtained permission to get up before the rest of the community, and do it in her place. The work was not quite done when Madame Louise arrived, and saw with distress how she had been assisted. As soon as the hour of silence was over, she hastened to say playfully to the Sister who had filled her place, "You don't know how you grieve me, dear Sister, you can't think how I like this work! I was always very fond of mutton, and now that I shall never eat it any more, it is hard if I mayn't at least sniff it when it comes in the way of my work!"

Madame Louise appealed to the Prioress to protect her from the charity of her sisters, and not to allow them to do her work ; while she herself had to incur a gentle rebuke for neglecting the spirit of holy poverty, when, as sometimes happened, she would go and light up the choir earlier than was necessary, for fear some one else should do it for her.

The nuns took it by turns to go after dinner and help the lay sisters to wash up, and clean the kitchen utensils. Madame Louise begged that she might take her turn with the rest, but the Prioress informed her that the postulants who wore silk dresses were always dispensed from this work, as it was a pity to spoil their clothes, the material of which might, later on, be used for different purposes in the sacristy. Madame Louise thought this difficulty easy to overcome, so she wrote off directly to the King to ask him to send her a dress suitable to the occupations she wished to pursue. Probably the King did not understand much more about washing up dishes and cleaning pots and pans, or the costume best adapted to such an employment, than his daughter ; for in two days' time he sent her a robe (or *manteau de lit*, as it was then called), made of pink taffety silk—not exactly the most suitable garment for an amateur scullery-maid ! As, however, the new dress was less ample in its folds than usual, and above all, as it was

of a colour not used for ecclesiastical purposes, it might fairly be considered less valuable than the Princess's other clothes, and accordingly Madame Louise made haste to put it on, and with childish delight presented herself to the Prioress, exclaiming, "Now, mother, you cannot refuse to let me help to clean up, since the King gives his consent; pray let me go at once." Doubtless, the Reverend Mother, who had passed through forty-two years of the religious life in its strictest form, and had learnt to take all things with a calmness and recollection which her royal postulant had yet to attain, must have smiled at the animated, eager lady, arrayed in her brilliant rose-coloured dress, so earnestly requesting permission to set to work upon her new employment. However, the desired permission was given, and Madame Louise hurried to the kitchen, where, before beginning, she took the wise precaution of watching what the others were about, in the hope of imitating them successfully. Satisfied apparently that there was nothing so very difficult to be achieved, and as usual desirous of taking the humblest office, the Princess took possession of a huge kettle, or pot, very heavy and very dirty, and in spite of remonstrances, set to work upon it, with every expectation of the most satisfactory results. Unluckily for Madame Louise, her observations had not been carried

far enough, for she began vigorously to work upon her great kettle, endeavouring to clean its grim outside as well as inside, after the same manner that she saw the lay sisters handling their more delicate saucepans. If moderate rubbing would clean a little pot, surely hard rubbing must clean a large one; it was only a question of degree! But all was in vain. The Princess scrubbed away might and main, till she could scrub no longer, and till her rose-coloured taffety became as black as the kettle, while that perverse vessel maintained all its original grimness. At last, Madame Louise was obliged to own herself conquered, and the lay sisters who had begun with looking on, half edified, half shy, could no longer restrain their merriment, and laughing heartily, they explained to the Princess that such vessels as these were only cleaned within. The royal scullery-maid joined in their laughter, honestly confessing that she had no idea of that, and hoping that with experience she should be more successful in her performances.

The Archbishop of Paris used to visit Madame Louise every fortnight, and on one occasion arriving while the sacristy linen was being washed, the Princess came to him in the parloir, saying, "I am glad, Monseigneur, that you did not come sooner, for I was in the midst of soapsuds, and should have kept you waiting." She was greatly delighted at being

employed in the sacristy, and once, when the Bishop of Amiens went to visit her, Madame Louise met him with the announcement, "You must be informed of my new dignity, Monseigneur; I am third sacristine, I wash and fold the linen, I ring the bell, and do all that sort of thing." Monseigneur d'Orléans de la Motte, the Bishop of Amiens, had been Superior of the monastery of S. Denis till within the last two years, when his advancing age and his heavy burden of episcopal duties, forced him reluctantly to resign the post. He had known Madame Louise intimately at her Father's Court, and naturally took a more than common interest in seeing her numbered amongst those whom he still looked upon as his spiritual children.

At the time when Madame Louise came to S. Denis, the mistress of the novices was the Mère Térèse de l'Enfant Jesus; this nun had been Prioress of the Carmelite house at Compiègne, where the Princess had known her, and learnt to appreciate the advantage of being trained by one so advanced in the spiritual life. It was from the successor to this good Mother, that Madame Louise had obtained the Carmelite dress she so greatly coveted, and one of her first letters from S. Denis was addressed to this friend. "I have not yet recovered from my joy," she says, "at being here; nor have I ever doubted

of your sympathy in my happiness. I ought to ask your pardon over and over again for all the tricks I have played you in order to learn various details of your holy customs, to say nothing of the garment I stole from you ! But now, you know the cause of all my questions, and I am quite sure that you forgive me. Adieu, Reverend Mother, do not forget me in your prayers, but ask that my sacrifice may be perfected as I would have it."

Most submissive as a postulant, Madame Louise only seemed to fear that the mistress of the novices would not be able to bestow a sufficiently close inspection upon her ; while, as she remarked, "a *ci-devant* Princess had more bad habits which needed correction than most people, and yet everybody was less willing to correct her." The great assistance rendered to her in many little ways by the *Sœur Julie*, during her first week at *S. Denis*, led Madame Louise to intreat the Superiors to allow that sister to assume the office of "*ange*," on her behalf, only now with a special view to her spiritual progress, rather than to her knowledge of outward detail. The Superiors judged that this request was the result of a real and extraordinary desire after perfection, and granted Madame Louise's request ; upon which she threw herself very earnestly upon the *Sœur Julie's* charity, intreating that Sister to spare no pains in

helping forward her vocation. The Sœur Julie was a remarkable person in her way. It has already been said that she was of Irish parentage, her family having settled in France at the time of James II.'s exile. While quite a child, Julie Mac-Mahon's love for silence and solitude attracted her to the Carmelite Order; and she entered it so early, that her novitiate was prolonged because of her age. Her pre-eminent characteristics seem to have been a very interior and recollected life, and a more than ordinary love of prayer and mortification; these qualities, combined with a most winning and attractive manner, had induced the Superiors to appoint her as "ange" to Madame Louise, on that Princess's first arrival at S. Denis. The new charge now laid upon the Sœur Julie was not what she would have sought for herself, but any false humility which might have hindered her from willingly accepting it, was overpowered by the desire she felt of forwarding God's designs, and helping to mould one of so strong and fine a character as she saw the new postulant to be, to the perfection of the religious and hidden life.

At the beginning of their new intercourse, Sœur Julie spoke out plainly to the Princess. "You may be sure, Madame, that every effort will be made here to offer you all possible indulgence; at every turn you will be met by it; no doubt you may accept

such indulgence, and still lead a far more edifying life than you would have done in the world ; but if you take my advice, you will not be a half-and-half Carmelite."

The Princess replied earnestly, that she had given herself up wholly to the religious life, and that, with God's help, she hoped to be a true and fervent Carmelite. Then, regardless of the postulant's former rank and position, Sœur Julie boldly set before her all the asceticism of the Order, showing her how the perpetual mortification practised in it, as its life and essence, resembled the two-edged sword of which the Apostle speaks, cutting off self both from the external and material side, as well as from the very inmost soul itself. Madame Louise did not shrink from a doctrine so hard to flesh and blood ; for long she had courted self-denial and mortification, but through those earlier attempts at Versailles made by the Princess, as well as the later more systematic efforts of the Carmelite at S. Denis, there was never any harshness or want of tenderness to others ; austerity, severity, abnegation, all was accepted for herself, nothing laid upon others ; and thus the very motive power of all, the keynote to all austerities, being love, love for Him Who bore, in His Humanity alone, more than all His creatures united could ever bear for Him. all harshness and

roughness became impossible, and the seeming paradox of softness and hardness, tenderness and austerity combined, was seen in the King's daughter as it has been in many another not less noted in the pages of the Book of Life, though unmarked and unrecognised in the world.

Sœur Julie fulfilled her undertaking honestly, never failing to admonish her voluntary pupil in the religious life when such admonition was needed, and the whole community was edified by the humility with which their new member received all such instruction; even the good Sister herself was amazed at Madame Louise's docility and total absence of self-consciousness. Often she would humble herself for some trifling fault, of which she had been quite unaware, until some sign from her "ange" indicated that she was wrong; sometimes, indeed, the Sœur Julie would purposely convey a rebuke which was undeserved, as when, for instance, she found the Princess on the floor scrubbing underneath a press in the sacristy, fatiguing herself in a way which her delicate health could ill bear, instead of begging her to spare herself (as the Superiors had desired that she might be led to do), Sœur Julie combined with this an attack upon her self-will, saying, "Why will you persist, Madame, in tiring yourself thus, when you do your work so badly that it only hinders

others, and all has to be done over again." The Princess meekly accepted the rebuke, and promised to refrain from such work until she could do it better.

Madame Louise's gratitude and attachment to this Sister were so strong, that once the Superior expressed his fear that she was in danger of forming a tie of natural affection which might be injurious to her religious life. "I can honestly assure you," she replied, "that I love all my sisters heartily, and delight in any opportunity of proving that I do so, but I must also confess that I cannot help having a strong preference for the only one who has courage to tell me of my faults, and to mould me to the true spirit of our life. Surely she who flatters me least, loves me the best, and is the one to whom I owe most."

This well-founded affection was indeed kept under all such regulation as the most absolute religious perfection exacted; and though it lasted till the death of Sœur Julie, the community never found any reason to complain, but rather the general edification was promoted by so holy and unworldly a friendship between two of its choicest members.

One of the Princess's greatest difficulties was to learn to observe the required silence of the monastery. Her previous life had not been a good preparation for this, and both former habits and natural tempera-

ment led her to move briskly, and speak quickly and loud. Her failures in this respect were numerous, but she was always ready to acknowledge the fault, and bear its penalty without the slightest semblance of a ruffled temper or a false shame, thinking so humbly of herself that she was not surprised or discouraged at her failings, or vexed at receiving any lesson which forwarded her self-knowledge or renunciation.

From the first, the Princess had gladly adopted as simple a dress as she could (the postulants continuing to wear their secular garments until their novitiate began); she was aware that it was not customary for postulants to use a watch, and readily gave hers up; but the mistress of the novices, finding that it was a great sacrifice, thought fit to permit the Princess to retain it till the end of her postulate. Soon, however, Madame Louise's conscience led her to decline this indulgence, and as she could not readily lose the habit of looking at her watch, she wore her rosary at her waist instead of it, and whenever she mechanically took that out, said an Ave Maria. Sundry little knick-knacks in gold and silver which had been sent with her necessary things from Versailles were cast aside with the remark, "These are little idols from the temple of vanity, which ought to have stayed in their own place!"

Diligently as the Princess had studied the Carmelites' rule of mortification, she had naturally much yet to learn, as, for instance, in the mortification of the senses, especially that of the eyes. Hitherto she had imagined this to consist in carefully guarding them from all that was dangerous, but now she learnt that a higher degree of self-denial consisted in the continual offering up of curious though innocent glances, and many similar indescribable little sacrifices, which were more difficult to her than to most people, from her natural liveliness and total want of practice in such restraint. Nevertheless, the habit of recollection in this respect, as in others, was diligently cultivated, although at the cost of many a bad headache. The daily offices were nothing new to her, nor were the hours consecrated to devotion more than she was able to adopt; indeed, beyond these, Madame Louise found pleasure and comfort in various special devotions, among which that of the Childhood of our Blessed Lord was prominent, and she daily recited those beautiful litanies. Her Superiors allowed her the privilege of daily communion, and those who had the direction of her soul were wont to say that while her preparation for the Blessed Sacrament was perpetual, her thanksgiving also had no end save that of her life. In one respect alone the Princess's royal birth and ties followed her into her devotions. As none

within monastic walls were probably so alive to the trials, snares, and temptations of Royalty, or the great importance to the nation and the Church that true religion should govern the hearts of all who fill stations of power and influence, so none were so constant and fervent as herself in prayers for the King, and all the Royal family, the wants of the Church, and the necessities of the nation.

It is worthy of note, that even during her postulate, while we might expect to find Madame Louise mainly upheld by those first fervours which are often granted to those who are beginning a life of devotion and self-abnegation, such was not the case. At Versailles, during those long years of expectation, she had often been granted spiritual sweetness and consolation which had lightened the burden of waiting, but now, though her end was attained, these privileges were withdrawn, as though He Who had led His servant thus far, would have her take up her Cross deliberately, and without any spiritual intoxication of delight. Madame Louise went through a period of great darkness, when all sensible consolation was withheld from her, and nothing but a firm abiding faith upheld her. Yet she remained undisturbed, unremittingly stedfast in all spiritual exercises, and able to offer herself to Him Whom her soul loved, in darkness as in light, unquestioning, un-

doubting of His Love, abiding in calm, patient trust, until it was His Will that the day should break and the shadows pass away. At this time, too, the practice of absolute obedience was a trial to her, especially sometimes, when it placed a restraint on pious observances she was anxious to fulfil, or when her Superiors refused to allow her to bear certain hardnances for which they thought her as yet unfit. Sometimes she could not refrain from a remonstrance; "Have I entered religion," she would ask, "in order to seek my own ease and convenience?" and she would plead with the mistress of the novices, when striving to elude that good Mother's indulgence; "If I do not begin at once to bear the austerities of our rule, I shall never be able to bear them at all."

Notwithstanding all these trials, the Princess was not less happy than she had expected to be in her beloved Carmel. Among her private papers, one written shortly after her entrance at S. Denis, expresses this clearly: "How shall I thank Thee, O my God, for that Thou hast willed to bring me to Thy holy dwelling-place! how realise the blessedness of the thought that my life will henceforth be spent before Thy altar, and that there my last breath will be drawn! Surely the least thank-offering I can make, O Lord, is that of my whole being, under the yoke of that holy rule which I have come here to

follow. How can I regret what I have forsaken? it is all as nothing compared with that which I have found, O my God, my all! Henceforth poverty shall be my treasure, and what a treasure, since through it I hope to inherit Thy Kingdom! Who could compare a few days of penitence here to that immense and eternal weight of glory! Yes, dearest Lord Jesus, I do accept Thy Cross, and accept it with my whole heart. Grant that I may never be separated from it. Grant me, Lord, such grace as will enable me to become Thy true victim. Oh, precious title! how great a privilege to forsake all this world's empty titles to bear that of Thy victim!"

Writing to a nun who had been transferred to another community, the Princess says, "Thank God, since the last chapter I am delivered from the expiation of my birth, and am no more called *Madame*, but Sister—a name so dear to my ear and my heart, so pray, if you are a dutiful daughter of S. Denis, remember this. About the same time a venerable Mother of the community wrote as follows of the royal postulant:—

"I must tell you that time only increases the fervour of our incomparable princess. She follows all our usages, and so far from injuring her health,

she seems to grow stronger. Her physician has been to see her, and said that he was sorry to be obliged to own that he never saw her so well! Neither the maigre which she has kept since her arrival, or her straw mattress on which she sleeps soundly, or our matins, which she always attends, seem to hurt her; and her humility, obedience, and dependent spirit are a constant source of admiration to us. Do not suppose that these are anything of an ordinary kind—God Alone could inspire so much virtue. I can assure you that there is not a day, scarcely an hour, in which one does not see Madame Louise kneel to ask permission for the smallest things from our Reverend Mother or the mistress of the novices, or to render account to them of her every action. You would hardly believe me, if I were to give you all the details I could give—we, while we rejoice to be bystanders, yet cannot get used to it, and we go about striking our breasts with confusion! You know our rule—well, Madame keeps it as well or better than any of us. . . . She is always foremost in every practice, she sweeps and washes up, and all with such a grace, that one is perfectly enchanted."

Madame Louise took her own view of all this, as we may judge from her answer to a lady, who, visit-

ing her, remarked that it was very admirable to see one who had been educated as a King's daughter, and whose health was so delicate, adopting so ascetic a life. "For my part, madame," replied the Princess, "nothing astonishes me so much as your astonishment, for you know the Gospel, and you know well that we do not find any special way of salvation provided there either for delicate persons or for kings' children, who must seek to repent and be saved just like other people." On another occasion she remarked that "the world must think her singularly unfit for the Kingdom of heaven, since it was so amazed to see her do that which others did every day in order to attain to it, without any comment being made upon their conduct." She used to say that all her sisters in the Carmel had offered a more acceptable sacrifice to God than hers, most of them having left a position in life which was agreeable to themselves; and at all events they had renounced their liberty, whereas she had been a very slave at court, her chains being none the less chains, because of their glitter. "It is a great mistake to talk so much about my sacrifice," she would say; "the sacrifice was not in doing what I have done, but in waiting so long before I did it."

As the Abbé Bertin had told her, the house at S. Denis was called "*la Trappe de l'Ordre*," and

Madame Louise was anxious that her presence should not be the cause of any slackening of the rule, either out of respect to herself or to the members of her family. She inquired into the regulations as to the entrance within the cloister of persons from without, and expressed her strong desire that no exceptions might be made in her favour. "When it is necessary to hinder forbidden visits, then, and then alone, I must remember that I am a Daughter of France," she said. Visits were inevitable at the beginning of Madame Louise's Carmelite career. The three Princesses, Adelaïde, Victoire, and Sophie, were the first of the Royal family who came to see their sister; they were met at the cloister door by all the community in due form, and entered, accompanied by three ladies in waiting only. The elder sisters were not sparing in regrets, or tears, or embraces, but Madame Louise soon waved their lamentations aside, asking if they wept because they envied her happiness? The four Royal sisters attended Benediction together, and then the nuns went as usual to the refectory to supper, Madame Louise and her fellow postulant, the Sœur Adelaïde, leading the little procession; the Princesses followed, and insisted on being allowed to wait on the nuns themselves. The supper consisted of potatoes and cold milk, and Mesdames de France looked on aghast while their

sister ate a very hearty supper which would certainly have killed her with indigestion at Versailles, they thought! Next came Madame Louise's nephews—the Dauphin (afterwards the unhappy Louis XVI.), and the Comtes de Provence and d'Artois—they too assisted at Benediction, and the little Princesses Clothilde and Elisabeth, their sisters, followed. The latter, whose sorrowful destiny and saintly patience as the faithful companion of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette in their woes, have won her a tender and respectful memory in history, was at this time only five years old. Could the bystanders have looked forward into her future, how far rather might they have wept over her, than over her aunt! After these visits, there came a whole tribe of great people—all the Bishops, who happened to be assembled at that time in Paris; numberless great personages who doubtless wished to see so wonderful a sight as a Princess who had voluntarily lost all the advantages of her position; the cathedral chapter, and the civic authorities of S. Denis; truly there seemed no end to it, and the poor Princess must have begun to think that not even a convent could procure her a little rest and peace!

The King himself did not come to see his daughter till the 4th of May. He had never before been inside a convent; and now he had announced his

wish to be received without any ceremony. The King arrived at four o'clock, and was met by the Prioress, Madame Louise, and some other nuns. When the door was opened, Louis XV. alone entered, saying to the captain of his guard, "You may wait here for me without anxiety, the Carmelites will be my guard." The Princess presented the King with one of the keys of the door, which, according to custom, had two locks, so that no one could go in or out by the help of one key only. This ceremony was observed whenever the King came to the convent.

After an hour's private conversation, Madame Louise and some of the nuns showed all the house to the King. He visited his daughter's cell, the simplicity of which amazed him, especially the bed, which he felt, and pronounced it to be terribly hard. They next visited the various little oratories which are established in different parts of a Carmelite convent, by S. Teresa's desire, and which are called hermitages, and then they went to the choir. Here the King did not see the Tabernacle, and not realising any difference between it and the oratories where he had been before, he continued talking in a raised voice; Madame Louise immediately warned "Papa Roi," as she habitually called him, to speak low, and was obeyed. Later on, he inquired, with royal courtesy, as to the families of the various nuns who

were now his daughter's companions, and noticing that they were all of Irish origin, he remarked, "So I have got an Irish guard here, it seems!" Before leaving, the King caused some of his suite to be admitted into the parloir, that they might see his daughter again.

A week later, as the King and the royal family were going to meet Marie Antoinette, whose marriage with the Dauphin was to take place within a few days, the whole party stopped at S. Denis, and visited the house, dining with the Superior in his apartment. Louis XV. was rather astonished, while inspecting the convent, to find the kitchen altogether deserted and without even any fire. He wanted to know what there was to be for supper, and why the preparations had not begun? and was greatly surprised at hearing that as supper was not till six o'clock, no preparations were wanted till five o'clock. His Majesty thought this very wonderful, and doubtless congratulated himself that he was not obliged to sup with the Carmelites. Mesdames de France took these privations to which their sister was subjected, greatly to heart; and she had to comfort their anxieties concerning herself, as best she might. In a little note, dated May 20, 1770, addressed to one of them, Madame Louise says, "Did my bed distress you so much? But I really am not so much to be

pitied; I am very cosy in it, and to go no further than this very day, I slept in it for eight hours! I assure you there is nothing very hard in such things, when one remembers all that our Lord bore for us; besides, it really costs me nothing, and I am ashamed to own that while all the world looks on and is edified, I am quite as comfortable as I should be on a feather bed. You know I don't like undertaking what I am not able to perform; so you may be sure, that if I have chosen the life of a Carmelite, it is not without being satisfied that I am able to bear it, and in order to be quite sure, I have submitted to eighteen months trial, instead of fifteen, as is usual. But I am so clear as to what is God's Will, that I do not feel at all uneasy about it.

Shortly afterwards, the King brought the lovely young Dauphiness, Marie Antoinette, to make acquaintance with her Carmelite aunt, and proud of his new grandchild, he summoned all the community in haste to see Madame la Dauphine.

At this time, petitions and applications of all kinds poured in upon Madame Louise, for money, influence, and what not. Her power of giving alms was nearly at an end; when the postulant's silk gown was laid aside for the novice's serge, all private possessions would cease to be hers, and though influence might remain, the Princess shrank from a

personal use even of that, as is testified by a letter from her to the Bishop of Amiens. That prelate wrote on behalf of a community of Hospitalières, to whom Madame Louise had rendered some special service, expressing their desire to be allowed to place the Princess's coat of arms within their church, as a record of her benefaction. Madame Louise declined to allow this, adding, "I always disliked these empty honours, and that still more since I have forsaken the world and its pomps. I shall be greatly obliged to you, Monseigneur, if you will excuse me from doing what is now requested; all the more as it seems to me inconsistent with religious humility to make a pompous display of the arms of a Carmelite; even if the arms of the Order were put up, it would be different."

CHAPTER IV.

AT first, Madame Louise was aware that a good deal of interruption was inevitable, and, however unacceptable to her individual liking, she bore with it for the sake of others. But she was very anxious that it should come to an end, as well as the various dispensations and indulgences pressed upon her, in virtue of her birth and education, which made every one afraid that she could not endure the hardness of her new life. Even Pope Clement XIV., who wrote to congratulate the Princess upon her determination to embrace the religious life, and to store up her treasure where moth and rust could not corrupt, or thief break through and steal; yet thought well to add a special clause, by which he empowered whoever might be her confessor for the time being or in future, to relax the rule for her, and to dispense her from any such part of it as he might see to

be desirable for the welfare of her soul and conscience. This brief had been presented by the Apostolic Nunzio, Archbishop of Damascus, to Madame Louise; he read it first privately to her, and then, summoning the community, read it again to the assembled nuns. Madame Louise ventured to protest against the dispensations, accepting with greater satisfaction a portrait of the Holy Father, which accompanied his letter. This last, she forwarded to the King, who answered characteristically enough, that he had read it, and thought it "very fine, but rather long. I know the Holy Father's face, and when I come to see you next, I will tell you if the portrait he sends you is like those I have seen, so you need not trouble to send it to me." The King took a different view of the dispensations and consideration bestowed on his daughter from her own, and he would not allow her postulate to terminate at the usual period of two months, insisting on a longer period of probation before she should enter upon her novitiate. However, there was no reason that she should not be admitted by the chapter at the ordinary time, and accordingly, when two months had expired, a chapter was held, when the Royal postulant presented herself before it, kneeling down, and saying, "Mothers and sisters, I humbly entreat you of your charity to receive me and give me the holy religious

habit, in spite of my unworthiness ; I hope by God's Grace, and the help of your prayers, to do better hereafter than I have hitherto done." The Prioress briefly answered that the community were grateful for being selected as her home, as well as to see her striving to be still more worthy of their Order by her devotion to the rule than by her high birth ; and declared that they gladly admitted her to take their holy habit. Then Madame Louise made a prostration, and kissed the ground, after which, she embraced the Reverend Mother and all the Sisters, and the ceremony was completed. A few days later, a similar chapter was held, on behalf of three other postulants, and during its sitting, Madame Louise united with them in prayer for the fulfilment of their wishes. Later, when the chapter was breaking up, she met them at the door, saying, " Mothers and Sisters, I thank you for having admitted my companions."

The festival of S. Martha (July 29,) is a great event in all Carmelite houses ; it is the feast day of the lay Sisters (or *Sœurs du voile blanc*) ; and when this arrived, Madame Louise threw herself most heartily into it. Part of the arrangement is, that on that day the novices turn cooks, both in order to give the lay Sisters a holiday, and to set them free to join in certain community functions, which are ordinarily reserved for choir Sisters only. The Princess was

delighted with this plan, and, in right of her seniority, as first of the postulants, she claimed to be head cook—a privilege readily granted her; so away the party set for the kitchen, and dismissed its ordinary staff—the good lay Sisters half wishing they could stay to see whether Madame Louise's culinary attempts would be as amusing as those they had witnessed in the scullery. The head cook proceeded at once to invest herself with an apron, and prepare for work. All her staff awaited her orders, which, truth to say, she was sorely puzzled how to give! However, it would never do to be over bashful, so they began boldly, the great aim being to produce a most delicious dinner. Sugar is a luxury only permitted twice a year in the Carmelite kitchen—on the Prioress's festival, and this, the lay Sisters' feast—so the first rule established by the new *chef de cuisine* was, that the salt cellars should be banished, and everything cooked should contain abundance of sugar. At last this wonderful dinner reached the refectory; but those who sat down to eat it were obliged to confess that the only whet to their appetite was the thought that it had been cooked by a Princess, and the most charming of Sisters. From this point of view, and no other, the repast was pronounced delicious!

There was one point which Madame Louise was

very anxious to gain before entering upon her novitiate, and that was the power of kneeling for any length of time, upright, and without support. In vain she tried to acquire the habit; she was always overcome by unbearable weariness, and it was a real trouble to her, and a subject of earnest prayer. At last she determined to ask the prayers of S. Louis Gonzaga, the special patron of the novices, on her behalf; and she intreated one of her fellow postulants to join in a novena to this end. This time her prayer was granted, henceforth Madame Louise was able both to kneel through all the appointed exercises of the Order, and also to spend hours together on her knees in private devotion. At first the change caused some uneasiness among her Sisters, who knew how determined she could be in what she thought a duty, and feared lest her health should really suffer from excessive fatigue. Her assurances were not heeded, and the Abbé Bertin was referred to. Not till then did the Princess explain how God had heard and granted her prayer.

At length the King was induced to consent that the day should be fixed on which his daughter should take the habit. The month of September had been proposed, and Pope Clement XIV. had instructed his Nunzio to perform the ceremony, as his representative. Sunday, the 9th September, was fixed, but as

the *prise d'habit* took place late in the day, the King suggested that it should be deferred until Monday, on account of the various preparations, which would occupy all the Sunday morning. Accordingly, September 10th was finally appointed, and the Bishop of Cydon, as General of the Carmelites in France, sent a circular to all the houses under him, to announce the fact, as well as the privileges granted to them by the Holy Father on the occasion. The Bishops of France were gathered together in Paris in special assembly, and they were requested by Louis XV., all to assist at the ceremony. The King's Master of the Ceremonies, the Marquis de Dreux, was sent to S. Denis to prepare the church with all possible splendour; all the finest tapestries and decorations were employed; the choir of the chapel royal went thither to receive instructions as to the music; everything that was possible was done to enhance the magnificence of the ceremony, by which a daughter of France was to lay aside all royal pomp and splendour for ever. While all these preparations were going on, the Princess herself was in retreat, preparatory to the important step she was about to take. Her retreat began on the Thursday evening, and on Saturday, the Nunzio brought S. Teresa's cloak, which was preserved at the convent of the Rue S. Jacques in Paris. The Carmelite Mothers

there allowed this precious relic to be deposited at S. Denis for a few days, on this solemn occasion of such special interest to their Order. Very early on the morning of Monday, September 10th, a detachment of the Gardes Françaises was stationed in the avenues leading to the convent, and a hundred Suisses were placed in the outer court to keep the doors of the church. Madame Louise had declined to use her privilege of granting the entrée to the Court and others who might wish to be present at the ceremony, and this accordingly was done by the Nunzio. A succession of masses were said all the morning in the convent church, the Nunzio himself celebrating the community mass, at which Madame Louise and all the nuns communicated. After the thanksgiving, the Nunzio, attended by the Visitor and Superior of the house, and sundry other ecclesiastics, proceeded to the Princess's cell, which he blessed, as the Pope's representative, at the same time presenting her with a singularly beautiful Crucifix.

Dinner time came, when, according to custom, the postulant presided, attired in the gorgeous robes of gold, and silver, and ruby silk, and the diamonds, in which she was to present herself at the altar.* These

* "Elle portait une robe de cours à fond de lames d'argent avec des colonnes de fleurs de même metal coloriées et faisant l'effet de rubis. Entre les colonnes on voyait un parsemé de

robes were presented afterwards to the church, and the King sent a hundred yards of gold lace in addition, so that they might be used for vestments. At noon the royal body-guard arrived, and were stationed all around the church and cloister. At one o'clock the Princess's former attendants were all admitted to take leave of their mistress, "*la bonne princesse*;" their office, which had virtually closed when she left Versailles, was now officially concluded, and there was a scene of great lamentation and weeping at the separation.

Three o'clock was the hour appointed for the ceremony. The King professed himself unable to bear so trying a function, and the Royal sisters also declined to be present. It had, therefore, been arranged that the Dauphine should represent the family, and give the veil to her royal relative. A few days before, little Madame Elisabeth was visiting at S. Denis, and her aunt, while fondling her, said, "You will give me my veil when I take the habit, will you not, *ma petite reine*?" But the child utterly refused, and on being pressed to say why, she answered, "It must be the Dauphine, she will not mind losing you as I do." Accordingly, at three

fleurs d'or. Ce mélange produisait un éclat merveilleux. A la tête, au cou, et aux bras de la princesse il y avait pour plus d'un million de diamans."

Holy Ghost College
SCHOLASTICATE,

o'clock precisely, the Dauphine arrived with her suite, Madame Louise, who, on this occasion, was still to enact the part of Princess, meeting her sister-in-law with her attendants in the convent court. At the door of the church, they were met by the Nunzio in pontifical robes, preceded by the King's Master of the Ceremonies, and accompanied by twenty-two Bishops, and a large number of other ecclesiastics. The Nunzio conducted the two Princesses to the *prie-dieu* prepared for them in front of the steps of the sanctuary, and then took his own place near the nuns' grille, attended by two dignitaries wearing copes, deacon and sub-deacon in their proper vestments, and twelve priests in surplices ; the Bishops and other clergy were in the choir, and the rest of the church was crowded by all the most eminent members of the Court, and others.

In the midst of this imposing scene, Madame Louise was naturally the object of every gaze. She remained in her appointed place, calm and recollected, and doubtless thinking less of the visible surroundings than of that Invisible Presence, and cloud of witnesses, which are a greater reality to a fervent heart than the most engrossing realities of this world. Monseigneur de la Rivière, Bishop of Troyes, preached the sermon, of which no details are given us save that it was so touching that all present,

the royal postulant excepted, were moved to tears. That ended, Madame Louise rose, and accompanied by the Dauphine and followed by the Court, advanced with a steady step towards the cloister she was about to enter. On the threshold she turned one last look upon the world she was leaving, and with a calm, grateful joy, bade it farewell for ever. The brilliant assembly which filled the church looked on, half admiring, half marvelling, while the Princess prostrated herself at the Feet of Him Whose bride she sought to become, and then saw her raised by the Prioress, who led her to the choir, preceded by the other nuns; the Dauphine, and her suite, as well as that of Madame Louise, still accompanying her. The hymn "*O gloriosa foeminum*" was sung the while. The Princess was placed kneeling in front of the grille, her confessor the Abbé du Ternay, and the King's chaplain the Abbé de Colincourt, close to her, while the Bishop of Chartres remained by the Dauphine, whose chaplain he was. The Nunzio then proceeded to put the customary questions as to the motives and intention with which the postulant was taking this important step, to which Madame Louise replied with dignity and composure. This done, the choir began to sing the "*In exitu Israel*," while she retired to take off her gorgeous apparel, and replace it with S. Teresa's serge, an operation which she per-

formed joyfully, herself throwing off her royal trappings eagerly. Robed in the dress of a novice, the Princess returned to the choir, and taking her place at the grille, received the girdle, scapulary, cloak, and veil, each blessed by the Nunzio, from the hands of the Dauphine, who could not restrain her tears while fulfilling her office. The ceremony of taking the veil in a Carmelite convent is always impressive, and one can well imagine the thrill of feeling in that gay world assembled there, mingled as it probably might be with many varying emotions, as the King's Daughter, according to the customary rite, prostrated herself on the ground as one dead, and was covered over with the serge pall, which typified her burial to the world, while the choir sang "Veni, Creator." One can easily believe that every heart was touched. Those who loved the Princess personally wept at this, to them, irrevocable parting; and the solemnity and pathos of the moment may well have moved, as it is recorded to have done, courtiers, soldiers, and strangers in no common degree. The usual prayers were said, the asperges made, and then the novice arose, and looked wonderingly upon the weeping assemblage round, for her own heart was filled with gratitude and joy. The Pontifical Benediction having been given by the Nunzio, the service was ended, and the Dauphine hastened back to Versailles

to tell the King all that happened, and Sœur Térèse de Saint Augustin was surrounded by the nuns, who feared lest she might have been troubled at the sight of so much emotion displayed by so many she loved. But she was calmly happy still, and assured them that during the whole ceremony she felt under a heavenly influence which raised her altogether out of all that surrounded her. The Nunzio, the Archbishop of Rheims, the Bishop of Cydon, and one or two prelates, came to congratulate the new Sister, who lost no time in writing to the Holy Father to thank him for the interest he had shown in her, and for deputing his Nunzio to give her the habit of S. Teresa. To this letter the Pope replied as follows :—

“Clement XIV., Pope.—To our very dear daughter in Jesus Christ, Madame Louise Marie, daughter of our dear son Louis XV., King of France, and admitted under the name of Sœur Térèse de Saint Augustin to her year of novitiate, in the monastery of Mount Carmel in the town of S. Denis in France : Peace and our Apostolic Benediction. The letter wherein you announced and described to us the holy ceremony of your taking the religious habit, on the 10th September last, has filled us with exceeding consolation. We have you continually in remembrance when we offer the Unbloody Sacrifice of the mass to the

Eternal Father, but on that day when you put on the holy habit of religion, our paternal and continued affection for you constrained us to offer it solely on your behalf, the more to obtain for you a great abundance of all spiritual graces. To-day, being the festival of your patron saint, the Mother Teresa, we have made special memorial of you, our beloved daughter in Jesus Christ, at the altar, and we will not cease to entreat the Most High that it may please Him to grant you all perseverance in your holy and generous resolution. We shall continually offer prayers to heaven that He may abundantly bless you, and we give you our Apostolic Benediction with a most fatherly love, as well as to the Mother Prioress and all the religious in your monastery.

“Given at Castel Gandolfo, this 13th October 1770, in the first year of our Pontificate.”

Louis XV. (who on this memorable occasion made some very handsome presents to the Church) soon came to see the new Sister. At first he was somewhat discomposed at the change in her dress and appearance, and the meeting called forth a strong outward emotion in both father and daughter. When the King had recovered himself, he turned to the Princess, saying, “Well, my dear child, have you positively made up your mind to renounce all your rights and

titles?" "Far from it, dear papa," was the answer, "I shall never renounce the most precious of all my rights, for I shall always be your daughter." "As to that, *mon cher cœur*," the King answered, "your title in this respect is written in ineffaceable characters." The Prioress had a petition to make to the King, namely, that he would insist that a portrait of the Princess, which had been begun only, should now be finished; his daughter was unwilling to consent, thinking such a thing inconsistent with her new home and life. But Louis XV. took the Prioress's part, and Sœur Térèse was forced to submit, though somewhat reluctantly.

The novitiate now was fairly begun, and with it, different duties and trials to those which Sœur Térèse had encountered as a postulant. Of her dress, she was, so to say, proud, and the Archbishop of Paris, who frequently went to S. Denis to watch over the progress of that religious vocation he had helped to form, told with interest and affection how on the first occasion that he saw the novice in her Carmelite garb, she was eager to explain every detail of it to him, turning herself round before him in every direction, that he might understand exactly how it all was. At first the gravity of her Sisters was sometimes rather severely tried by the way in which the royal novice put on her dress; she was always one

of the first to appear in choir of a morning, and as looking-glasses are a forbidden luxury among S. Teresa's daughters, the new Sister was apt to bear visible tokens of what her companions kindly called "*son saint empressement*." Sœur Térèse herself was wholly unconscious of these little peculiarities in her appearance, to which her attention was generally only called, when having begun to say her prayers, she found herself being manipulated by friendly hands, which laboured to set her straight. Then she would resolve to do better the next day, but these resolutions were generally broken, and it was a long time before she learnt to appear without her dress being all awry. In the summer the Princess had thought that no one could ever be cold in the heavy serge habit of the Carmelites; but when winter came, she found it otherwise, and as neither choir or cells are ever warmed, and the two hours of recreation are almost the only time when the fire can be visited in a Carmelite convent, Sœur Térèse suffered not a little from the cold. On one occasion,—she herself tells of it in a letter to one of the Mothers of the Rue de Grenelle;—her hands were so painfully cold that she fairly cried. "Would you believe it?" she writes, "I sobbed like a baby. But it is well to have something to offer to our dear Lord."

Another cause of suffering during the beginning of

her novitiate, was in the *alpargates*, or flat-soled sandals, similar to the common shoes formerly worn by the poorest classes in Spain. Sœur Térèse had hitherto been accustomed to wear the high-heeled shoes of the period, and though she concealed the pain caused by this change as long as possible, it became known when her feet and legs swelled to such an extent that she could not walk at all. The Prioress wished that she should be dispensed from wearing the *alpargates*, which was just what Sœur Térèse was anxious to avoid; she intreated that she might be allowed to get over the difficulty at first, as it must be got over, sooner or later, and accordingly after a time, custom made this, like any other external habit, easy to her. It was a great effort at first to take her turn as "*versiculaire*" in saying the offices, and to read the lessons at matins, or to sing the "Salve Regina" when it fell to her to do so, and, however cold the weather, the effort required to do this, never failed to make her hot enough, she said. Still she would never accept any dispensation from her rightful tasks. Waiting on the nuns in the refectory, or being reader during meal time, were more welcome offices; and her very early rising and great punctuality often enabled her to take the place of the lay Sisters, and ring the first Angelus bell, if they were a little behind time.

When the severe fast of eight months, observed by the Carmelites, began, her Superiors wished to give Sœur Térèse some exemption from the full rule, but she was so earnest in her intreaties to be allowed to try and do like the rest, that they conceded the point, always excepting the fish which they insisted on her eating daily; this, in itself, was no slight penance to her, disliking it as she did, although she suffered considerably through the long fasting morning, to which she was so unused. However, she never told the Sisters how much she went through; she used to say, "It is all very well to take such care of me, and I must submit, until I have taken the vows; but then there will be nothing more to fear from the Versailles spies, and when I am irrevocably and unquestionably a Carmelite, I must be allowed to be so thoroughly, as you are."

The nuns admired their royal sister's readiness to endure hardness and mortification, and her humility in seeking to avoid observation, but none, save her directors, really knew how much she suffered physically, except now and then, when concealment became impossible. One of the nuns wrote as follows concerning her to a Benedictine Father:—"The more we see of Madame Louise, the more we admire her. During the six months she has been here, she has had no indulgence, and yet she is really

better than before. Since Holy Cross Day she has kept our daily fast, and you would be astonished to see what an appetite she has for beans, carrots, potatoes, and fricasséed cabbage! One would think she had never eaten anything else. She is always one of the first at morning prayers, untidily dressed enough, it must be owned, for she dresses herself, and spends about five minutes upon her toilet. She wears our serge without a complaint; in short, the only difference between her and the rest that can be found, is in her more frequent communions. Of all our austerities, I think she feels our habit the hardest, and our *chaussure* caused her some suffering, but she soon got over it. Her courage triumphs over everything; let anything cause her some trouble, and it is sure to be done at once."

The effect of such an example was not lost upon the other novices. S. Denis was sought after, now that it had been brought so prominently into notice, by the King's daughter taking the habit there, and the number of postulants increased rapidly. Some of these were young ladies who had been delicately brought up, and who shrank, as mere natural inclinations must ever do, from the hardness and self-renunciation of the religious life. They imagined that their royal companion doubtless enjoyed sundry secret dispensations, and envied her supposed privi-

leges. But they soon found that so far from being dispensed from the observances common to all, Sœur Térèse had a habit of taking upon herself, whenever she possibly could, all duties or tasks which other people disliked, and that instead of enjoying any exemption from rule, in consequence of her natural birth, she looked upon that birth as the very reason for a yet more lowly and absolute abnegation of self in her new family. The mistress of the novices frequently used to invite the other novices to a more vigorous aim after perfection, by the example of Sœur Térèse. "Look at your companion," she would say; "do you think she expects to win some other heaven than that which you seek? or that you have been brought up with more refinement than she has? Cannot you do what you see your King's daughter doing every day?"

Sœur Térèse took a great interest in all her fellow novices, and used often to talk to them about the subjects most interesting to them as well as herself. "Indeed I think we are much happier here than at Court," she used to tell them; "even in material things, we are better off. At Versailles I had a very grand bed, but then often I could not sleep; now here on my straw mattress I sleep so soundly that it is all I can do to wake at the sound of the *matraque**;

* The wooden instrument used to wake the community.

I had a luxurious table, but as I never had much appetite, I could not enjoy it, while now I am almost ashamed of enjoying our peas and carrots as I do ! And as to the peace of soul one feels, surely one can only say that one day in the Lord's House is better than whole years in king's palaces. If we are tied down with observance of rules here, the Court has plenty of such ties, and far more burdensome ones than ours—and those who are at Court must conform to its customs, however distasteful."

Sometimes she would compare the two lives. "At Versailles, dinner was at two o'clock, when here we have vespers. At five o'clock I was obliged to play cards, instead of meditation, as here. At nine I had to go to the theatre or to Court balls, and spend the time in that instead of in our offices. What a change for me ! and how thankful I am to be delivered from such a heavy yoke as that was, to bear the light happy yoke of Mount Carmel ! Indeed I have found nothing but happiness here, and every day I ask myself what really are the austerities of our life?"

Sœur Térèse was very anxious that all her fellow novices should seek as eagerly after perfection as she did herself, and almost unconsciously she acted as a sort of second mistress to them. "We ought never to stop and consider whether or no we like

what we have got to do," she would say to her younger Sisters; "we ought to think of nothing but if the rule requires it, or God wills it. Those two thoughts are quite enough to overcome, or at all events to lighten any repugnance to our duties." Sometimes Sœur Térèse's natural impetuosity and warmth made her a little over-zealous, and then, if she thought she had run the least risk of hurting those she meant to help, she would ask their forgiveness most humbly. One day she was conscious that the remarks she had been making to a novice sounded very much like a reproof. Directly that the conviction made itself felt, Sœur Térèse knelt down before the Sister, saying, "Forgive me for my quickness—it is the evil consequence of my education. You see we Princesses are so badly brought up, that we always think ourselves right, and cannot bear the least contradiction. But I hope I shall correct myself."

Soon after Sœur Térèse had entered upon her novitiate, she became very specially interested on behalf of a young lady, Mademoiselle Sophie de Beaujeu, who wished to join the Carmelites, but her family was poor, though noble, and she had no dowry. The Princess's only regret, as regarded herself, was that she had been obliged to wait so long before entering upon the religious life, and she took special

pleasure in removing the difficulties which hindered this young girl from consecrating her life, as she wished, from an early age. The same thing repeatedly occurred, but Mademoiselle de Beaujeu was the first postulant to whom Sœur Tère'se was appointed as "*ange*," and to whom her own name was given in religion. Accordingly Sœur Tère'se devoted herself to the young Sœur Louise Marie with almost motherly tenderness, and boundless patience, helping her to bear up under difficulties which at first seemed insuperable, and often doing with or for her, those tasks which tried the young postulant most severely. Some touching little anecdotes are recorded of their intercourse. Sœur Louise Marie was most sincere in her aspirations, but she was young and sensitive, and at times the natural would overpower the supernatural, and she would grow quite weary and disgusted with a life which in material detail was so foreign to her former habits. One of her duties was to sweep and clean out the choir; and on a certain morning poor Sœur Louise Marie having tired herself out with her work, fell into a fit of overwhelming depression and discouragement. She began to think to herself how it would be the same thing every day, every day! till at last she could bear it no longer, and throwing down her broom, she went off to one of the hermitages, or oratories, where she wept bitterly, till she had

almost persuaded herself that she had better return to the world, since the religious life would certainly be intolerable. It so happened that at this moment, Sœur Térèse de Saint Augustin came to this very hermitage in order to pray; and at the sight of her "*ange*," the poor child began eagerly to pour out her griefs. "Always to be sweeping, and rubbing, and so on! I am so weary! I can bear it no longer!" "Yes, dear child," the Princess answered kindly, "always sweeping, or rubbing, or doing something or other we don't like; always mortifying our wills. We will persevere in it together, you and I, and some day we shall have the privilege of saying, 'Until death;'" the form of a professed nun's vows ending with the words, "*Et ce jusqu' à la mort.*"

The poor little Sister grew calmer at this, and made a fresh start, but she had many troubles yet. One day she was too late for morning prayers, the penance for which consisted in the culprit's appearance in the refectory carrying her pillow, as the accomplice of her fault, and so publicly accusing herself of it. This appeared to Sœur Louise Marie to be an intolerable humiliation, and one that she could not endure; and by dint of thinking about it, and working herself up, she ended by declaring that she would never submit to such a thing. Sœur Térèse was wont to take an altogether different view

of such occasions of submission, and heartily sorry for her young friend, she tried in every way to comfort her and lead her to see the matter from another light. At last, rightly guessing that the proud spirit would be more easily softened by example than by words, she got leave to fulfil Sœur Louise Marie's penance for her, and accordingly the Princess appeared in the refectory at the appointed time, carrying her pillow, and accusing herself of sloth and indolence after so humble and meek a fashion, that the novice's pride was completely overcome, and she never again was known to rebel against any observance of rule, however humbling.

A newly arrived postulant one day ventured to remark, "If I were Madame Louise I should find it very difficult to conform to all these things." "If you were me, you would not be *you* any longer," was the answer, "so I suppose you would think what I think about it; you would say to yourself, I did not come here to be waited upon and to give orders, but to serve and to obey; and if my former worldly training gives rise to difficulties, I ought to try and conquer them, both for my own sake, and as an example to others." Sœur Térèse was always afraid lest her long formed habits as a Princess should interfere with her present duties, and be the cause of any lack of edification to those around her. She

always believed every one else to be better and worthier than herself, and nothing would have made her suppose herself to be, as she really was, the brightest example of obedience and humility within the convent walls. It was always a subject of distress to her when any exceptions were made for the members of her family, in their visits to S. Denis, which would not be made for others. Thus when Advent arrived, and with it greater strictness, Sœur Térèse refused to receive her Royal nephews: the King on hearing this sent word to his daughter that if she refused to admit him, he would have the doors of the convent broken open. It is hardly necessary to say that his visits were not rejected; indeed, the King came frequently, and Sœur Térèse lost no opportunity of urging religious considerations upon her father. Naturally impressionable, Louis XV. appears not to have discouraged her efforts, and at times he was even moved to tears by her tender appeals. Not unfrequently at the end of his visit, he would attend Vespers or Benediction, rejecting any place of honour, but simply going into one of the stalls.

Christmas came, and Sœur Térèse found great happiness in her first experience of that holy festival as a Carmelite. She was just going to bed at three o'clock in the morning, when a message was brought to the effect that she need not get up in time for

morning prayers. Fortunately it was a permission, not a command, so she had full right to answer pleasantly, "Though I am a King's daughter, I am not less bound to my duty;" and the permission was declined. The severe fast of the Carmel is suspended on Christmas Day, and the feast of S. Stephen, and Sœur Térèse, having gone early to the refectory for a piece of bread, chanced to break the knife in cutting it. She immediately sought the mistress of the novices, and kneeling down, accused herself of having sinned against "holy poverty," by her carelessness.

A custom prevails in Carmelite houses, that on Holy Innocents' Day (which is the novices' special festival), the eldest novice takes the place of their mistress, and for that day fulfils her duties, giving the usual instruction, making suggestions, and striving to kindle a fresh ardour for perfection among her companions. Sœur Térèse was the novice upon whom this task devolved on the present occasion, and though very mistrustful of her own power, she endeavoured zealously to fulfil the duties laid upon her. Vespers were over, and the novices were in the midst of their pious exercises when their temporary mistress was summoned to receive the Duchesse de Chartres. Sœur Térèse wished to decline the visit, but as the Prioress forbade this, she was obliged to go to the parloir, begging one of her Sister novices to

come and summon her very soon. All the noviciate grudged her departure, and she was speedily recalled, much to her own satisfaction.

When Lent arrived, the Superiors, who knew how hard Madame Louise had found it to observe even such a Lent as Versailles admitted of, were unwilling that she should try to keep the rigorous fast observed in the Carmel; but they yielded to her earnest intreaties, and by the help of God's Grace she was able to observe the usual rule of the house, without having suffered in health when Easter arrived. Only those who were previously acquainted with her former delicate health and fastidious appetite could have guessed that it cost her anything to adapt herself either to the severe fasts or the coarse food of the Carmelites; she never betrayed the slightest distaste to a mode of living, which, to say the least, was altogether new to her, and which could not fail to cause her some discomfort. She was wont to say that no cook at Versailles could concoct so appetising a sauce as that provided for her in the Carmel by work and fasting. A certain worthy lay Sister whose reputation was great as a bad cook, even for the Carmel, used to boast that at any rate the Princess was satisfied with her cookery, which could not therefore be so very bad. "Just see," she would say, "how her Royal stomach accepts our gourds and

carrots ; I hope forsooth we shall hear no more about our being bad cooks." Not unfrequently presents of delicacies, adapted to the rule of the house, were sent from Versailles or elsewhere to the Princess ; but she never would allow anything to be considered as intended for her special use, but used to call any such gifts "the Court alms to the community." The Superior noticing, as he thought, that the health of the nuns had latterly been less good than usual, attributed this to the austerities peculiar to the community, and feeling the present to be a bad time for such pressure, he consulted the Archbishop of Paris, and determined to suppress all that was peculiar to S. Denis, and did not form part of the rule. The Princess was exceedingly troubled when she learnt this. "I see what it is," she said to the Abbé Bertin ; "for Madame Louise's sake, you are going to introduce laxity into the house ; yet you know that I was acquainted, not only with the rules, but with the customs of this house before I came, and that I chose it specially because of its great regularity. If you carry out your intentions, and I become the means of introducing lukewarmness into the community, I tell you plainly that I could not bear to feel that I was injuring my Sisters so grievously, and I shall immediately ask leave to be transferred to some other house." This resolute decision induced the Superior

to give up his intentions, and before long his mind was set at rest as to the anxiety he had felt.

Sœur Térèse not unfrequently indulged in the same little bits of fun that had been so natural to Madame Louise, as when, for instance, having noticed that in the distribution of linen, new articles were always given to her, she asked whether it was a rule for the novices to flatten down the rough seams for the professed nuns, as if that were the case she would gladly take her share in doing so, but otherwise, she hoped she should not have new linen given her out of the usual course. It is rather an amusing proof of the Princess's energy, that she worked so hard as to wear out her habit at the end of five months. It was then the winter season, so while the garment was being mended, she had to sit wrapped up in a blanket. This practical illustration of the vow of poverty delighted her, and in a letter to her sister, Madame Adelaïde, written while the mending process went on, she tells her, that holy poverty not permitting her to possess two dresses, she was sitting rolled up in a blanket! About the same time, a new pair of the alpargates which had tried her so sorely, were given to Sœur Térèse. Not being quite aware of the custom of the house, she kept the old ones, intending to give them yet some wear, but was roused to a fear that she was offending against holy poverty when

the Sister in charge of the nun's *chaussure* asked what had become of the old pair.

There was one point only in the vow of poverty, which sat uneasily upon Madame Louise, and that was the powerlessness to give alms which it involved. Until her final vows were pronounced she was incessantly besieged with applications of every kind, and used to say, laughing, that the world was determined to make what use it could of her to the end, and she must bear with its importunity until her final separation from it. Every day made her desire this separation more and more, and whatever reminded her of her natural position increased the desire. Thus, when the Princesse de Conti obtained a special permission from the Pope to go within the convent inclosure whenever she wished, and even to remain there for her meals, Madame Louise allowed her kinswoman to use the permission once, but she intreated her not to do so again, or in any way to hinder that which was the very essence of Carmelite life, an absolute obedience of the rule.

About this time, the Empress Maria Theresa sent her portrait to Madame Louise. She caused herself to be painted in the Carmelite dress, and underneath she wrote the following touching words: "When you are kneeling before God's altar, your heart filled with the peace which you have learnt to prefer to the

turmoil of a Court, look upon this portrait, and let it bespeak a tender thought for my child and for me." That child was the beautiful and unhappy Marie Antoinette.

CHAPTER V.

THE year of Madame Louise's novitiate was nearly over, and all those concerned in her direction were daily more convinced of her very marked vocation. The Superiors proposed to the community to elect her in order that they might proceed to her taking the veil. When Sœur Tèrese de Saint Augustin learnt this, her exceeding humility, and her exalted idea of the honour of becoming one of the consecrated brides of Christ, led her to think that she would never be elected. "Of course, I thought that the Sisters would vote for me, because I was a Princess," she said later on, "but I thought that God, Who is all powerful and perfectly just would not allow my profession to come to pass." Out of delicacy, she had not been instructed, according to the usual practice, to apply for admission as a full Sister, but at her own request the customary forms were now complied with, and the Princess

came twice before the chapter to ask to be admitted to make her profession. Before this petition is made for the third and last time, the custom is to make a final and solemn examination into the vocation of the candidate for the veil. In the present case, it was Monseigneur de Beaumont who was to fulfil this office ; and the King having appointed three ladies in waiting to receive the Princess and remain in attendance upon her, while she was without the cloister, they arrived at S. Denis on the day fixed, and followed the Archbishop, the Superior, the Confessor and Chaplain of the convent to the cloister door, where Madame Louise came, accompanied by the Prioress, who committed her into the Archbishop's hands. He then conducted her to the sanctuary, followed by the little suite mentioned. Then, after she had prostrated herself before the Blessed Sacrament, kissing the ground, she was left kneeling before the Archbishop, to whom she laid bare the interior life of her soul, its aspirations and fervours, and he having thoroughly weighed and proved her vocation, pronounced the solemn permission to her to take upon herself the final vows, offering her up as a precious and costly sacrifice to Him Who was present before them in the Tabernacle.

Her brief thanksgiving made, Madame Louise rejoined the ladies in waiting, and showed them the

uncloistered part of the convent. She was longing to rejoin her Sisters, but felt that it would be uncourteous so hurriedly to quit old friends, sent, too, by her father. However, she begged that the community might join them in the parloir, and the Court ladies could not help being struck with her complete freedom and happiness among this her adopted family in religion. One of them complained that the Princess paid more attention to the nuns whom she saw every day than to them. "If you knew how I love them," was the answer, "and how well they deserve my love! They are very angels, and I owe everything to them." Another of the ladies expressed her surprise to see the nuns so cheerful; she knew that their life was very austere, and she fancied that their manners and conversation would be the same. "You need not be so surprised," the Princess answered, "we have the cheerfulness of a good conscience. I am so happy here, that every day seems a festival to me. Everything within the house seems bright to me, even to its walls!"

After half an hour of such conversation, Madame Louise asked to be readmitted within the cloister, so the community went to meet her at the door, and having received the Archbishop's Blessing, she was conducted to it by the same little procession as before.

On entering, the Princess threw herself at the Prioress's feet, and after the good Mother had raised and tenderly embraced her, they went to the chapter, where, meanwhile, she had been elected. Then, for the third time, kneeling amid them, she asked in due form to be admitted to make her profession. The Prioress told her that her petition was granted, adding a few affectionate and dignified words. "Although you are a great Princess, dear sister, your vocation to the religious life is a special favour granted you by our Dear Lord ; and while you confer honour upon our Order by choosing it in preference to any other, I am not afraid to say that you on your side are honoured by it, since through it you are admitted to become the bride of Christ. I hope you will become an example of holiness among us, as well as a benefactress ; and I would intreat you to strive that you may be as much raised above us all by your virtues, as you are by your natural rank." Mutual kindlinesses and *embrassades* were then generally exchanged, in the midst of which the Princess slipped away in order to pour out her thankfulness in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Her joy was very genuine and almost childlike in its expression ; during all the evening recreation she was perpetually exclaiming, "Oh Sisters, I do thank you for having elected me !" One of the nuns said she was surprised

that Madame Louise had not stayed longer without the inclosure when once there with her old friends. But she replied quickly, "I did stay as long as I could, I wanted so much to return."

Directly after this, the King came to see his daughter; he was agitated, and seemingly not altogether pleased at her great satisfaction at the consummation of her sacrifice; and he shrank, though she did not, from the thought of the severe life she was undertaking. "I cannot understand," he said, "how you can like such a hard life?" "Nevertheless, dear Papa," the Princess answered, "I am perfectly happy; it is true that the life is hard, but the thought that I am here to pray for the salvation of those I love best, is so comforting, that it is quite enough to account for my having grown so much stronger than I was." Still Louis XV. wept over his daughter. Could he have looked on a few years, how much bitterer tears he might have shed over his other descendants, whose future he at present looked upon as so far preferable to that of Madame Louise!

Madame Victoire, who always seems to have bestowed a half maternal care upon her younger sister, undertook to write to the Holy Father to tell him that Madame Louise was about to take the vows, and the result was a brief addressed to the Nunzio, desiring him, as on the occasion of her entering the

novitiate, to represent the Pope, as also other briefs addressed to Louis XV., and to the Princess Louise herself. The latter was as follows:—

“Clement XIV. Pope.—To our very dear Daughter in Jesus Christ the Princess Louise Marie of France.

“Dear Daughter in Jesus Christ, Peace be with you.

“The day approaches, that brightest and happiest of all your days, dear Daughter, when you are about to celebrate your spiritual union with your Heavenly Bridegroom, taking the last solemn vows upon you, and consecrating to Him with an irrevocable and undivided devotion every power of your soul, your actions, hopes, and wishes, in a word, whatever may remain to you during this life.

“When we heard of your first retreat to the Carmelite Convent at Saint Denis with a view to taking the habit and entering upon your novitiate, we rejoiced greatly, and congratulated you for that you were able to perceive the vanity of the world, and to renounce all the pomp of Royalty in order to follow this holy life. But this our joy is greatly increased at beholding your stedfast perseverance in your undertaking.

“We thank God heartily for having withdrawn you from the attractions of the Court, and for giving you so marked a vocation for His service, and great grace,

which is so much greater, inasmuch as the exalted dignity, splendour, and luxury in which you have been educated, do but serve to inspire you with a greater zeal for all that concerns religion, humility, and charity. Be of good cheer, dear Daughter in Jesus Christ, and believe that the day on which you, obedient to the workings of His grace, give yourself up to God wholly and for ever, devoting your life to His Will and service through the sacred ties of your profession,—believe, I say, that that day will be the brightest and noblest of your life, far to be preferred before all earthly triumphs. We desire greatly that it were possible for us to be present at the solemnity, both to witness so worthy an action, and personally to exercise our Apostolic functions, by ourselves receiving your vows. But inasmuch as this is impossible, we supply the deficiency as far as lies in our power, by transferring the exercise of our ministry to the venerable Brother Bernadino, Archbishop of Damascus, our Nunzio, who will perform in our name and for us at your profession all those functions which are committed to him on the occasion of your taking the habit.

“One thing further we would say, in proof of the paternal love we feel for you, namely, how greatly we hope that day by day you will give us increasing cause of thankfulness on your behalf. It will indeed

fill us with exceeding joy to hear, that by God's Grace you make continual progress in the path on which you have entered, and that your life becomes daily more and more marked by all Christian virtues, especially that of humility. And in order to this, dear Daughter in Jesus Christ, you must attribute nothing that is good to yourself, but refer all things to God ; trusting absolutely to His Goodness, and wholly mistrusting your own strength, counting your own merits as nought, and seeking all power and rest in His Grace, fearing everything that is of human weakness, and believing that you can do all things through Him Who is the Source of all holiness, never ceasing to implore His Protection and Help. When once the mind and heart are filled with these motive powers, humility will penetrate even through the veil which covers it, and charity will take deep root, and bring forth the abundant fruits of all virtue. In saying this, we do not mean to give you instructions, of which we are well aware you do not stand in need ; we do but seek to prove how highly we esteem the holy state of life to which you are called, and the grace of that Divine vocation which leads you to follow it. It only remains to us to bid you give good heed always to testify your abundant gratitude to the King your father, to whom you owe so much, and that you never cease to offer up most fervent prayers for his

preservation, and for his true eternal happiness, as also for his kingdom, and for all the Royal family. And for ourselves, in virtue of the great love we bear you, we who are as your second Father in Jesus Christ, ask your prayers for ourselves, that God may look mercifully upon us, as also that you pray for the Church committed to our care, in behalf of which you should now be kindled with new zeal, since you are, so to say, bound to her with yet clòser ties through your profession. Be assured that we, on our part, will not cease to ask God's Blessing on your pious undertakings, and that He may confirm you with fresh outpourings of grace and holiness. And in proof of this our fatherly love for you, we give you and the whole Carmelite Order, with all affection and from our heart, our Apostolic Benediction.

“Given at Rome, Aug. 14, 1771, in the third year of our pontificate.”

Certain temporal affairs had to be attended to at this time also, before the Princess set them aside for ever. With a touching humility, Madame Louise wished not to enact the part of Princess even with respect to her dowry, but to offer the same *dot* as was brought by others to the house, the very moderate sum of six thousand francs (£240 in English money). However, she did offer twice that to the Prioress, saying as she did so, “Here are six thousand francs

for me, and six thousand for my hump!" All else that was done for the house, both as to building and maintenance, she wished to be done as entirely from the King, without any special reference to her. Louis XV. intended to endow the House, but he also wished his daughter to have a suitable pension of her own. Madame Louise was greatly troubled at this, feeling it hard that not even in the strictest Order in France, could she escape from the trammels of her birth. However it became a matter of obedience, as the Superiors of the house, not wishing to offend the King, who had already conceded so much that was contrary to his inclination, desired Madame Louise not to persist in her refusal. Upon this, she yielded, writing to the Abbé Bertin as follows:—"In consequence of what you say, Father, I give way. . . . I should prefer to have no pension, and it would be more to the King's honour were it so. It might then be said, that Madame Louise, when she became a Carmelite, gave up everything, and refused any pension, and that the King, entering into her wishes, consented that it should be so." Louis XV. summoned the Abbé Bertin to discuss the matter with him, and was amazed to find that the Superior of S. Denis proposed to fix the Princess's pension at no higher a sum than 24,000 francs, (£1440). The King contended that this was too little; he quoted

the endowments of other Abbesses, and pressed to be allowed to settle a larger sum upon his daughter. The Superior, however, was firm, setting before the King how inexpensive the humble austere life of the Carmelites was; and telling him that so earnest was his daughter's desire to live according to the spirit of the religious life, that nothing save obedience had brought her to consent even to receive this limited sum. At last Louis XV. gave way, and with tears in his eyes, he signed the documents by which the proposed income was secured to Madame Louise.

It was a genuine mortification to the Princess, but she accepted it as such, saying to the Abbé Bertin, when he told her that the arrangement was made, "It is the only thing that troubles me. It would have been so far more to my mind to have possessed nothing whatsoever in this world; the only consolation is, that, in spite of my pension, I shall have nothing at my personal command, and after all I must resign my will to God's; perhaps it is so ordered lest I should feel any little passing self-satisfaction in being the first Princess who became a religious without retaining any income. But that was not my reason, as you, Father, know, for requesting that the King would give me nothing."

Louis XV. proposed to endow the house with a view to its maintaining forty nuns, and he consulted

his daughter freely as to the arrangements for that purpose, into which she entered warmly, herself drawing out a scheme by means of which to render the King's liberality as beneficial as possible to the community. His little note in reply has been preserved. "I will see you, my dear child, to-morrow afternoon about five o'clock ; meanwhile I have given the papers which the Abbé Bertin brought me from you, to the Contrôleur Général. They seemed admirable to me, and we will assuredly do our best for your community both as regards the present and future."

Another matter which Madame Louise had at heart, was that all her servants should be liberally provided for. "It seems but natural," she wrote to the King, "that they should be treated as they would be in the case of my death ; as indeed my new life is a death to the world." Apparently the King thought her wishes somewhat extravagant on this head, for he replied, "To-morrow, dear daughter, I will fulfil your commission to the Contrôleur Général. You are just, but nevertheless you want to pay the expenses of journeys which your household do not make. Nothing can be fairer than to give them wages, food, and some little *douceur* over and above. But what you ask is really too much, especially in the existing state of our finances. I have kept your papers, and

will return them with my decision when I have thoroughly considered them."

At last all affairs of this kind were settled, not without a measure of suffering to the Princess. Happy as she was in being at last permitted to give herself wholly to God, she was a human being, and one with a more than usually warm, impulsive nature, and she was perfectly aware that the life she now finally undertook for the remainder of her days, was one which required a stedfast crucifying of the flesh and its desires; but she was prepared to die daily for His Sake Who died for her; and there was neither self-delusion or excitement in the calm but joyous spirit with which she went forth to meet the future voluntarily chosen by herself. A retreat of ten days is the usual preparation for a Carmelite's profession, and to this Madame Louise gave herself up most fervently. In a little note written during it to the Abbé Bertin, she says, "I cannot tell you, Father, how I long for the blessed moment which is to consecrate me for ever to the service of my Lord. My health is excellent, and seems to grow stronger and stronger, and yet, as you know, a retreat is not a time of rest. But this, and the satisfaction I feel, and my longing for the 12th, all prove more and more to my mind that I am where God would have me. Pray for me, Father, I need it."

The last day of the retreat was very severe, according to rule, including a fast broken only by bread and water, and a vigil till midnight before the Blessed Sacrament; and it was thought that the Princess was scarcely equal to this after the previous nine days' strain. But when the Prioress proposed that she should relax the rule, Madame Louise replied, "I see, Mother, that you cannot forget what I was in the world. Do, I intreat you, try to forget it for ever, or if you do remember it, let it be only in the form of considering that for that very reason I need deeper self-mortification than others." That morning she wrote out her vows, and took the writing with her to Mass, kissing it repeatedly. At midnight it was necessary to order her to leave the choir, and go to rest for a short time; Madame Louise obeyed materially, but she could not sleep, and her whole night was spent in prayer.

The Archbishop appointed the Devotion of the Forty Hours to be observed during the three days previous to the ceremony, with the double object of obtaining yet greater grace for the Princess in her vocation, and of increasing the edification of those without.

At last the day arrived. The Archbishop celebrated the special mass of the ceremony, at which of course the Princess communicated. The thanksgiv-

ing over, the community went in procession to the chapter, Madame Louise being led by the Prioress. Here all the precious relics possessed by the community were exposed for the occasion; none save the nuns were admitted, and there, kneeling before the Prioress, the novice answered the usual questions as to her object and aim in taking the veil. This done, the Prioress, according to custom, made a short address to the novice, reminding her of the weighty obligations she was about to undertake: "Henceforth, dear Sister, your will ceases to be your own, and you who were born to command must be subject to all those set over you by God. The vow of obedience excludes all question, choice, selection, or individual action; it governs the mind, binds all desire, and subdues all judgment. In order to fulfil it perfectly,—and I know you aspire to perfection, it is not enough to obey, but you must obey promptly, and at the cost of leaving undone whatever you may have in hand; such obedience is the truest, gives God the greatest glory, and forwards our own sanctification best. Obedience, too, must be cheerful and willing, in imitation of the perfect submission shown to His Heavenly Father by our Dear Lord when on earth. In a word, through the vow of obedience, we give up for ever all right to dispose of ourselves; we renounce our liberty, we put ourselves into the

position of pupils for all our lives ; we return to a state of practical childhood, a spiritual and holy childhood indeed, but one that is to last as long as we live. Our will is merged in that of others ; we resign the exercise of that will, and only retain the sacrifice. Such is the first vow you are about to take. The second is no less essential, and if our holy Order has preserved anything of its first fervour, we owe it to a strict observance of poverty. It will not suffice for a daughter of Saint Teresa to abandon all worldly possessions, if she retains any desire, hope, or power, to possess anything ; her detachment must be even more absolute than her renunciation ; she must not even consider those necessary articles which she uses as her own, and she should strive to lay aside all those ordinary expressions which convey or imply a sense of property. Studying to imitate the poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who had not where to lay His Head, she must count herself happy, not merely in going without the ordinary comforts of life, but even without such as she might lawfully possess. Poverty is her heritage, her patrimony, her treasure ; she seeks out opportunities of bearing its trials, and rejoices in whatever affords them. Such a love of poverty, dear Sister, is the surest bulwark against the spirit of the world, and henceforward it is easy to tread in the pathway of the Cross. By your third vow you under-

take to carry that Cross, and surely it is a sublime vow which makes your body a living sacrifice to God, which deprives you even of the most innocent sensual gratifications, inasmuch as chastity is an angelic virtue which lives upon and is fostered by mortification. It is as a choice vine growing and thriving amid thorns, and can only be kept in all its pure brilliancy by a ceaseless and resolute war against all our senses, which are its bitterest enemies."

This was certainly no Royal road of flattery that was set before the Princess, and the loving and even grateful words, (in reference to her choice of this individual community as her retreat), which followed, were, one is sure, as genuine as the sterner truths addressed to the august novice. At their close, Madame Louise, still holding her written vows, placed her joined hands within those of the Prioress, and took the solemn engagement in a clear voice. The usual prayers and ceremonies followed; she was clothed with the full religious habit, and the customary crown of flowers placed on her head. She then prostrated herself while the *Te Deum* was sung, and as the first words burst forth, the convent bells gave the signal, and forthwith all the bells of the town rivalled one another in announcing to the crowds who had flocked to Saint Denis on the occasion, that the offering was made, and Madame Louise of France

a professed Carmelite. The ceremony concluded with the Psalm, "Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity;" and before that was ended all manner of affectionate congratulations and demonstrations began to pass between the new religious and her Sisters. Sœur Térèse de Saint Augustin could scarcely express her joy, save through thanksgivings to God. Her first action was to write a hurried note to the King: "I take the same pen with which I wrote my vows, dearest Papa, to tell you of my happiness, and to assure you that I can never forget that I owe it all to you."

Mesdames Adelaïde, Victoire, and Sophie, had received the Holy Communion that morning, uniting their intention with their sister's self-oblation. The King provided a festival dinner for the community, during which, the R. Père Turpin, a Benedictine, read a discourse written specially for the occasion. When dinner was over, the Nunzio, Monseigneur de Beaumont, the Visitors, and the Superior, came to the parloir to visit Sœur Térèse and the community. One of the Visitors, M. Lequien de la Neuville, afterwards Bishop of Dax, describing the visit in a letter, says that "the Princess entered the parloir with all her own peculiar dignity, wearing her crown of flowers, and saying, 'This crown is far more precious to me than

that of France and Navarre!’ We spent the recreation hour there, and all assisted at vespers, and Benediction, when the *Te Deum* was sung, a great crowd of people present.”

Madame Louise had written to the Bishop of Amiens to announce the day of her profession, and to ask his prayers. He answered, “It did not appear fitting to me, however much I desire your perfection, to answer your kind letter until your retreat and the consummation of your sacrifice was over. But I celebrated with your intention as soon as I heard from you, and again on the 12th, I asked, Madame, that you might be granted both perseverance and progress : God may conceal them from you, but I hope they will be real. And I asked that while you bring many blessings to your convent, you may above all bring that of a holy example. I cannot come to see you before the 12th or 13th of next month, when I shall rejoice to behold you wearing the veil, more precious than a royal crown.”

The Visitors sent a letter to all the Carmelite houses in France, announcing the Princess’s final vows, and congratulating the Order on such an addition to it. M. Lequien de la Neuville took a copy of this letter to Madame Louise, and described his visit as follows : “. . . . Above all, I admire the Princess’s love for the rule and for silence. She is

most particular about not opening the grille, and seems by no means to desire visits. The King goes to see her once a fortnight, but the rest of the Royal family go but seldom, at her own desire. On Monday, I took her our circular letter, and she seemed quite humbled by it. . . . Since you ask the question, I must tell you that she speaks to the Visitors and Superiors of the house like the other Carmelites, kneeling. . . ."

The public ceremony of taking the veil was yet to come. This was fixed for the 1st October. As on the occasion of taking the habit, the King and Mesdames de France refused to be present, but Louis XV. deputed his grand-daughter, the Comtesse de Provence, to represent him at the ceremony. The external arrangements were very much similar to those of that previous occasion. The Nunzio celebrated the community mass, and it was he who received the Comtesse de Provence, and conducted her and the ladies of her suite to the inclosure, which they alone entered. The sermon was preached by Monseigneur de Roquelaure, Bishop of Senlis, but, as it was remarked, the sight of the Princess in her religious dress, her calm, happy face, stamped with the grace of holy recollection, was a more fruitful lesson to the multitude of courtiers who thronged the Convent Church than any spoken eloquence. The

music for this occasion had been most carefully prepared, and was of no ordinary perfection. After the "Ama Christum," "Veni Spousa Christi," and the Psalm "Exaudiat," had been exquisitely sung, the Prioress was seen to lead the Princess to the grille, where the Nunzio placed the veil upon her head. The Comtesse de Provence then spread it over her, and thus the final ceremony was accomplished. The Te Deum was sung, the newly-professed nun prostrating herself the while, the Apostolic Benediction was given, and Madame Louise of France remained, restful and happy under its influence, separated for ever from the world and its perils.

Ever since the Princess had been at S. Denis, the Abbé Bertin had studied her character, and watched the growth of her interior life, and while she was yet a novice herself, he had determined at the earliest opportunity to place her at the head of the novitiate, feeling convinced of her more than ordinary capacity for leading others in the path she trod so bravely, and being also well aware how much the welfare of a religious house depends upon the way in which the Mistress of the novices fulfils her office. Many a most admirable religious might not be a good mistress of the novices, he knew, and the combination of personal holiness with tact, quickness of perception as to the workings of the soul, the gift of a

winning manner and influence, as well as great tenderness and firmness of character, is one not very easy to find. The Abbé Bertin considered that these qualifications were united in no common degree in the illustrious lady who was now one of his spiritual children, and her royal birth and education which proverbially give a habit of observation of character, and penetration into it, seemed to him to increase her fitness for the post in which he wished to place her. Experience alone seemed wanting to her, but the Superior felt that Madame Louise's life at Court, during which she had so steadily kept her vocation in view, and her eighteen years of secret preparation for its fulfilment, gave her no slight experience in the hidden life, while her diligent use of the eighteen months already spent at S. Denis sufficed to teach her all that was required in external things. Accordingly, the Superior's views were carried out, and the day after she had taken the veil, Sœur Térèse de S. Augustin was appointed Mistress of the novices. Her consternation on learning this was great. So important an office put an end to all her visions of solitude and meditation, and she believed herself wholly incompetent to fulfil its onerous duties. So strong was her conviction as to this, that she ventured to express it forcibly to her Superiors, who heard her patiently, admired her humility, but per-

sisted in their original opinion, and confirmed the appointment. Then Sœur Térèse submitted, saying, "I have taken the vows, and all that I ask of God is that I may never take any steps either to obtain or to refuse anything." "I would rather not have to answer for others," she wrote, "considering how little fit I am to answer for myself, but I am at rest, because I can but obey."

By this time the Convent of S. Denis was in great request. The King's daughter having selected it as her retreat, led many to seek it—more indeed than could be received; consequently the novitiate was large, and the new mistress had thirteen novices under her care. Having but just left their ranks, she was thoroughly known to them all, and they received her gladly in her new position, though some few felt a difficulty in sufficiently forgetting that she was a Princess; a difficulty which Sœur Térèse was not long in effectually overcoming, and teaching all to consider her as the servant and mother of her novices.

"It is possible," she said to them, "that the devil may try to hinder us all by lessening your confidence in me, through making you think rather of what I was in the world, than of what I am now, which is all you ought to remember. If he should excite you to raise a stumbling-block for yourselves, and say, 'If our mistress were anybody else, I could open my

heart to her, but I cannot talk freely to *Madame Louise*,' I entreat you, Sisters, not to listen to such a hateful temptation." The first time that she had to speak to the novices in her new capacity, she said with great simplicity, "You must be as much astonished as I am, my dear Sisters, to see me at your head, instead of as one of yourselves; in truth, I am overwhelmed at the change. Do not expect me to discourse eloquently upon our sacred duties; I can *say* but little, but I hope rather to *do*; and we will help one another to fulfil those duties, to conquer our faults, and grow in holiness."

Among the novices was a certain Sœur Raphael, who became one of the Princess's dearest friends, and whose history during the Revolution was most eventful and interesting. Mademoiselle Hesselin (her name in the world) had very early shown a strong vocation to the religious life, and while at school in a convent in Paris she and a few other little girls joined together and resolved to fly from the world into the shelter of the desert. This laudable design met with some slight difficulties, especially as the convent was cloistered; so their next resource was to fix themselves upon the roof of the house in imitation of the Prophet who compared himself to a sparrow upon the housetop. Louise Hesselin, as leader, offered to try the life first, and accordingly she

contrived to get out by a garret window, and to take up a somewhat perilous position on the roof. Her only preparations consisted of a piece of bread, a bunch of grapes, and a few nuts. Meanwhile the mistresses missed her, and having hunted everywhere in vain, they were growing seriously uneasy, when some one discovered her elevated hermitage. Louise was coaxed down, to be cured of such eremitic propensities by a good whipping. Nevertheless, a little later she and her companions founded a Cœnobic Order of their own within the pensionnat, and in pursuance of their self-appointed rule, the children practised various acts of self-denial, until they were discovered by the mistresses, who stopped proceedings which were not unlikely to injure their health. After much opposition from her mother, Louise Hesselin came to S. Denis as a postulant about a year after Madame Louise had arrived there. Notwithstanding her early taste for mortification, she found the Carmelite Rule very hard to bear, and she was often depressed and out of heart. One thing in particular was a great grievance,—the use of common pottery ware instead of plate. She felt certain that the Princess could never use these common things, and one day Mademoiselle Hesselin inquired of a nun where the things which Madame Louise used were kept? The Sister guessed what was hidden

beneath the query, so she only answered, "Why look all about the house, and perhaps you will find the cupboard where Madame keeps all the things she has for her own special use." This set the young postulant to work in good earnest; her curiosity as well as her disgust for the pottery in general use, made her search eagerly for Madame Louise's cupboard, and the silver she made sure of finding there. From garret to cellar she searched, and searched, but all in vain; and in due course of time the truth became evident to her; she acquiesced in the use of the abhorred crockery, though at the end of a long life she had not learnt to like it.

Sœur Térèse and Sœur Raphael soon became friends, and when the latter was about to take the habit, the Princess endeavoured to win Madame Hesselin's consent to the step, by inviting her to come to the ceremony with her nieces, Mesdames Clotilde and Elisabeth, who were to give Sœur Raphael the habit. Two years later, Madame Elisabeth gave her the veil, and nearly twenty-five years afterwards, Madame Clothilde, who was then Queen of Sardinia, remembered early days at S. Denis, and received the Sœur Raphael and some scattered members of her community at Turin, with a kindly welcome.

Another novice to whom Sœur Térèse showed a very

special care, and who trod most faithfully in her steps, was the Sœur Térèse dela Miséricorde, (Mademoiselle d'Hillérin) who also underwent many vicissitudes during the time of the Revolution.

The Mistress of the novices had no sinecure. Writing to the Abbé Bertin, she says, "I have not a moment to myself, having the care of thirteen novices whose fervour requires perpetual caution; my only difficulty with them is to get them to rest. They are most zealous in prayer, as well as in all trying duties, and they would swallow the hardest mortifications admitted among us, as so much honey, if one did not take the greatest pains to moderate their ardour . . . I never can look at my novices without feeling stimulated to serve my Lord more diligently; their fervour is a continual reproach to my own sloth. I thank God for bringing my weakness into contact with those angelic souls who are so filled with His purest love, and who are my great joy and hope as well as the cause of great shame to me. I look upon my novices as so many mistresses, whom the Lord has graciously given me, to teach me to be humble, mortified, courageous, penitent, and fervent." In another letter to the Abbé Bertin she says, "I must own to you, Father, (for I am speaking as though in confession), that I find there is no better school of virtue than the necessity of preaching to others; and

our novitiate is often the cause of humiliation to me, when I think that I am teaching those who know far more than I do. I cannot tell you how many things I have been led to correct in myself by this thought, since I was given the charge of the novices."

Beginning with such a view of her work, it was likely that Sœur Térèse would fulfil its arduous duties well. The maxims she set before herself as the guide of all she did in her office, were drawn from the highest source, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." "I come not to serve, but to be the servant of all." "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." In this spirit the new mistress devoted herself with great tenderness to the material needs of her children, nursing the sick, and soothing the troubled, with unwearying care. By night or day alike she was at their disposal, going frequently to their cells after matins (which were said at three o'clock in the morning), to make sure that they were properly covered, and not kept awake by the cold; or after allowing a delicate novice to undertake some unusual vigil, taking her afterwards to her own cell to rest. The novices' letters passed through their mistress's hands as a rule, and from one of these having learned that the sister of a young novice was in great trouble

for want of a considerable sum of money, Sœur Térése applied to Mesdames de France to give what was required, keeping back the letter till she could tell her pupil that the trouble existed no longer.

Her humility made her always inclined to blame herself for any imperfections which appeared among her little troop, and she was wont to say, "If any of you deserve reproof, I always begin with reproaching myself, for if you are not all that you ought to be, no doubt it is because I cannot say to you what S. Paul said to those he taught, "Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ." The novices loved in after years to recall her words of tender admonition. Thus one records her mistress saying to her, "I know, dear Sister, that if I set you a better example, you would be less careless, would you not? If I took more pains with you, you would be less cumbered with unworthy trifles, and if I could teach you better, I should see you more hearty in your self-devotion; and perhaps if my own prayers for you were more fervent, you would be more faithful to our holy rule. So you see how much to your own interest it is to pray for my advance in holiness, lest my sins and shortcomings hinder the effects of God's Grace working in you."

She was always ready to encourage them in conquering any natural repugnance to special usages of

the house, by telling them how she herself had felt under similar circumstances. Thus, when Sœur Térèse dela Miséricorde confided to the Princess that one of her greatest troubles was being obliged to use the half-soaked towels which other people had used, she was comforted by the answer, "I must confess that when I came here first, I was disgusted, just like you, for when I used to think over all the self-denials of the Carmel at Versailles, I did not know anything about the common towels. So, when first I came, I used to be in a great hurry to wash my hands before the rest, so as to get a dry towel, but after a time, I began to think that this bit of self-love was not right, or consistent with my wish to take the vow of poverty, so I made up my mind to give it up, and I used to shut my eyes when I used the towel. I assure you these little sacrifices do us no harm when they are offered to God." Another novice had an unconquerable aversion for one particular vegetable, which often appeared in the simple bill of fare of the Carmel. She told the Mistress of this, who immediately answered, "I can quite sympathise with you, for the mere sight of it used to turn me quite sick. But I will tell you how I got over that; half the battle was the look of the thing, so I *didn't* look at it, and then the taste was not half so detestable; and after all, you know, many things

which are not nice to the taste are very good for the soul !”

To another novice she said, “I never could get myself right till I had conquered (*brusqué*) all my repugnances, it is the only way to overcome one’s imagination, which goes off at a tangent if one allows it to take its own way in these natural likes and dislikes. For instance, at one time, I could not bear having to sing the office, so, instead of accepting the dispensations offered me, I asked to be allowed to do it frequently, and my dislike soon passed away. Then again, when I was to give up wearing linen and take to serge for the rest of my life, nature rebelled, although I had already tried it a little, so I asked to be allowed to wear the hair shirt for a time, and after that the serge seemed as soft as silk.”

Diligence was a favourite virtue with Sœur Térée, and she held it to be specially necessary to the religious life. “When I feel tired and tempted to be idle,” she used to say, “I look at our cloister where one day my body will rest, and then I take courage, and forget whether it is cold or hot. The more other people consider you, the less you ought to consider yourselves. If I had given way to my inclination when I first came here, I should have been always ill. When the bell rang for office, I had a headache ; when the hour of meditation came, I felt

very weak, and so on, but with a little effort I went to my duties, and my malady was sure to be forgotten directly. In the summer, when we get up so early, I used to feel very uncomfortable and long to sleep on, but as soon as I was up, I was quite well. I tell you all this that you may be on your guard against your ease-loving body, and against the devil who is always trying to tempt us to give up our pious exercises, as well as against the kindness of our Sisters, who, in their over-anxiety for our bodily needs, may injure our souls. A religious ought not easily to think herself ill, and when she is only uncomfortable, she ought to rejoice silently that she has something more than usual to offer to her Heavenly Bridegroom."

One day, when in conversation with a postulant, whom she was urging to endure daily trials, Sœur Térèse said, "I know you will tell me that all this is so hard, and I entirely agree with you, for I do not deny that these things were and are hard to me, for nobody likes their ease better than I do. But when we came here, it surely was with the determination of letting our daily life be one of sacrifice, and the secret of making such sacrifices light is to think but little of what they cost us, and a great deal of the good they work in us." Not unfrequently she would bear the penances incurred by her novices, remark-

ing, "Every fault has its punishment, and if not borne by the culprit, it is but fair that she who ought to have hindered the fault, should bear the penance." When they were depressed or discouraged by temptations and other trials, she would say, "What are we that we should be surprised and put out at our weakness or even at our falls? The saints used to humble themselves, and go on again without being discouraged, but our discouragement is the result of our hateful pride which offends God in the most gracious of all His perfections, His Goodness, Mercy, and Omnipotence. Where there is discouragement, there is sure to be presumption, of which it is the common punishment." One day a novice, who was very downcast, came weeping to tell Sœur Térèse that she had fallen anew into some fault of which she was frequently guilty. "But what use are these tears from mere depression?" was the answer, "would it not be better, while filled with a sense of our own weakness, to put our whole confidence in Him Who knows how to bring good out of evil?" "What good can come of my perpetual faults?" the poor novice asked. "Very great good," Sœur Térèse replied, "they teach us both to humble ourselves before God, you, on account of what you are, and I on account of what you are not."

The Princess's natural vivacity did not hinder her

patience; as when some one spoke to her about a young novice, whose conduct was not very satisfactory, and she answered, "Wait awhile, and you will see that the little butterfly will come and singe its wings in the fire of Divine Love;"—a prediction which was thoroughly justified. But she was always firm, and could administer a rebuke with effect when it was needed,—as the *Sœur Tère*se de la *Miséricorde* testified when in her old age she used to tell the novices who were a moment late at their religious exercises, "We never used to see such a thing at Saint Denis, our Mother *Tère*se de Saint Augustin would not have tolerated it!" One day during recreation, a novice asked the Mistress if she found their society at all amusing? implying that she, the questioner, thought it very dull! "Did we come here to amuse ourselves?" was the answer; "or do you suppose that the society of the Apostles was very amusing to our Lord?" Another novice who had a naturally imperious temper, against which she did not quite sufficiently contend, was rebuked with the remark, "I think *ma sœur*, that *le bon Dieu* must have made a mistake, and that you were meant to have been born a Princess, not I!"

Sœur Raphael, who in later years was a shining light among her Sisters, could not bring herself to part with her hair when she took the habit. "Sup-

posing I do not persevere," she said to herself, "how can I go back into the world without my hair!" One day, however, the Mistress of the novices looked at her, and asked what the great lumps under her veil could possibly be? Sœur Raphael answered frankly, and probably supposed that her passing half-ashamed feeling was the end of the matter. Not at all, however. By and by, when she was in her cell, in comes the Princess, a pair of scissors in one hand, and a litter-basket in the other! "I have come to cut your hair myself," she said, "so that you may mind the sacrifice less;" and the deed was speedily done. Sœur Raphael was very submissive and penitent for her vanity; but she had not quite heard the last of it, for a few days after the Princesses were at Saint Denis, and the novices were all presented to them. When Sœur Raphael's turn came, "As for this one," Madame Louise said, "she wouldn't let her hair be cut off, so I was obliged to perform the operation myself!" "No doubt she had very beautiful hair!" one of the Princesses remarked. "Oh, as for that!" was the answer, "it was like old rags!" (*couleur de gueux.*) Everybody burst out laughing except poor Sœur Raphael, who used to tell the story with zest when she herself was ninety years old!

A postulant who had made her communion in the

morning, complained at the end of the day of having felt dull when she was alone. "Can a Carmelite ever be alone?" Sœur Térèse asked. "Is not her cell a paradise where she can always speak to her Bridegroom and hear His Voice; and are not the Blessed Virgin, her guardian angel, and the saints always at hand?"

A novice asked leave one day to read certain books which were not of a profitable kind. The Mistress checked her curiosity, and gave her Rodriguez on Perfection, and S. Teresa's treatise on the same subject, remarking that such books as these alone should stimulate the interest of a Carmelite.

Sœur Térèse had a great gift of winning the affection of her novices, but while she delighted in its reality, she repressed any exaggerated outward expression of it, saying that "the language of idolatry was out of place in a cloister." One of her novices who had more than ordinary cause for loving the Mistress, exclaimed once, "Oh, mother, what would become of me if I had the misfortune to lose you!" "Would you not still have God?" Sœur Térèse answered. "But," she added, "don't be afraid, you are much too far off perfection yet awhile for our Lord to give you the chance of making a sacrifice which would cost you so much."

None could have been a better teacher of detach-

ment and self-renunciation, for certainly few had more earnestly cultivated it than the Princess; as no one ever entered the Order with a more zealous adherence to the rule. All her novices agreed that they learnt more from their mistress's example even than from her instructions; even in obedience itself, a point which she inculcated in its fullest form, as being nothing short of "entire immolation of mind and heart, and absolute subjection of natural feeling," each felt that she placed before their eyes a living model in its greatest perfection. Sœur Térèse expected them to acquire such obedience as she practised; prompt, generous, unlimited, unquestioning, faithful obedience, offered wholly to God. "If you feel any repugnance to some duty," Sœur Térèse used to say to her spiritual daughters, "do not begin to try and find some lawful way of being relieved of it. Supposing that you find less pleasure in the society of some of your Sisters than others, try to be extra kind to them in action when present, and in thought when absent, without letting anybody find out the reason. If your opinion is opposed, and you might easily triumph over those who differ with a word, abstain from saying that word. If some piece of news is mentioned which cannot edify, though it may amuse you, avoid listening if you can do so without affectation. If some story is told, in your

presence, and distorted, do not indulge in the satisfaction of setting the narrator right, even though you could readily do so. Certain practices in the religious life are more difficult to you than others, observe them with special fidelity, without talking about them; or if you dislike some of the food ordinarily eaten in the community, try to take it as an antidote to your sensuality, and let none but God know what you do. If you are publicly reproved, or some humiliating action is enjoined you, submit willingly and meekly; even if you are reproved or punished when not to blame, keep silence before men, and let none know save He Who will certainly reward you." A young novice asked one day to be allowed a dispensation from some practice which was specially distasteful to her; but Sœur Térèse's answer was, "Just for that very reason, dear Sister, you must begin it from this day; if you conquer yourself in this matter, you will acquire strength to overcome your repugnance in things far more difficult than it, and your obedience will be accepted and rewarded by our dear Lord."

When she saw any of the novices very earnest in seeking to conquer and mortify self, she delighted to help and encourage them, often procuring them leave for extra communions as a reward. She was wont

to say that self-love and self-indulgence must be pruned and martyred relentlessly, if a religious would win that perfect restful peace, which nothing earthly can trouble. A faithful observance of little duties was another point to make for those aiming at perfection. "If you live to be a hundred years old," she used to say to her pupils, "always remember that your mistress never wearied of urging you to be faithful to your little duties, if indeed we can call any duties little, the practice or neglect of which takes us nearer to, or farther from God in this world, and helps to fix our place before Him in the next. Believe me, Sisters, we ought not to allow ourselves to think that there are such things as little duties or little faults in the service of so great a King as ours." Nor was she less stringent as to trifling breaches of charity; she could not bear the least infringement of the perfect law of love, either in word or thought, to enter within the convent walls, and was very particular in requiring atonement to be made if any such occurred. "Your speech to Sister so and so, would have passed as a joke in the world," she said to a novice, who had been guilty of some unkind words, "but in religion such a thing is detestable, and must be shunned as hurtful to the soul; I advise you to mention it in your next confession." It was re-

marked that no set of novices had ever been more united or lived after a more sisterly fashion, than those under Sœur Térèse's government.

Openness and simplicity were among her lessons. "I know no better foundation for all other virtues than simplicity," she was wont to say, "I am not afraid of the faults or defects of any one whose soul is perfectly simple and open before God; such a one is sure to correct her faults. But nothing is more opposed to the spirit of Christianity, or more speedily leads a religious to spiritual blindness, than a sort of self-will which lessens the reverence she is bound to have for every detail of our rule." A newly arrived postulant was complaining of the little practices habitual in the house. "When I was a child," she said, "I used to be made to kiss the ground, and kneel down to beg pardon, and the like; but I should never have expected to find such childish nonsense in a convent." "You are fresh from the world, *ma sœur*," the Princess answered, "and you talk as the world talks; you have spoken your mind freely, and I am glad of it; but now I must do the same, and tell you that if you mean to be a religious, you must forget all that you learnt in the world, and go back as much as possible to those days of your childhood, which you seem to despise so greatly, trying to win back the mind you had then. A true

religious seeks to be great by becoming little; she sees only humility, not folly in King David's self-humiliation before God, and she ever remembers our dear Lord's warning, that except we be as little children, that is, unless we are docile, simple, and straightforward, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." One of her maxims was that a novice when reproved should freely acknowledge her faults, and humble herself without making any false excuses or palliation. "When you have made any real progress in the interior life," she said, "if you are blamed for some fault which you have not committed, you will humble yourself in silence, praying for whoever judges you unjustly. Of course it is allowable, and it may even be a duty, to justify yourself, if there is any fear of causing scandal to others by your silence; but having said your honest 'yes' or 'no,' you should not persist even if you are not heeded; then is the time to make an offering of your self-love to God, saying, from the bottom of your heart, 'Lord, I have many a time sought to excuse myself of my real faults, so now it is well that I should suffer for what I have not done, and accept it for Thy Sake.' We generally become guilty as soon as we begin obstinately to assert our innocence. The only true humility is founded upon truth, and it is not truthful either to exaggerate or to excuse one's

faults ; both savour of artifice and hypocrisy. If we know ourselves well, we shall always find sufficient cause for humility in our real faults without attributing to ourselves any which we have not. God is Truth, and whatever departs from perfect truth offends Him in His very Perfection.

Sœur Térèse could not endure duplicity of any kind, holding it to be altogether inconsistent with the religious life ; and throughout her life she used to say that it is a fault seldom cured. She used to urge her novices to examine closely into their motives, telling them that before she left the world she knew human respect too often used to mingle with her desire to please God. "I used to leave undone what He required of me, out of fear of what the world would say ; but here, Sisters, we have to guard against another kind of human respect ; you are in danger of doing what should be done solely to please God, to please your mistress, or from fear of displeasing her, as if she and not God were to judge and reward you. Thus perverted, even your holiest actions run a risk of becoming idolatry. We find two precepts in the gospel which at first sight appear contradictory ; on the one hand, that we are to let our light shine before men that we may glorify our Father which is in Heaven ; and on the other, that we are not to let our left hand know what our

right hand does, lest we be hypocrites, seeking the praise of men. Surely our Lord meant to teach us by that that we ought to fulfil His precepts and the duties of our state of life, without human respect or ostentation, in the sight of all men; but that we should not display those good works and counsels of perfection which are not incumbent on us, either by His law or our own special engagement. Thus a religious is bound to set forth her absolute resignation to whatever God appoints; her deep humility, her perfect detachment from the creature, her unlimited obedience, her love of silence and solitude, mortification and poverty; in a word, she is bound to observe all the points of the law to which she has voluntarily subjected herself, so that her Sisters, beholding her good works, may glorify their Father in heaven. But over and above all this, a faithful spouse of Christ will find many occasions of offering hidden sacrifices to her Heavenly Bridegroom, which will be lovingly accepted by Him." Of scruples, she used to say, that "whatever did not come from God was evil, and scruples do not come from Him; let us seek to have not a lax conscience, but a peaceful one. Sadness and anxiety of conscience may well be found in the world and among its slaves, but religious ought to carry the Lord's yoke with more than fear." On one occasion, when a novice

complained that the time given her to prepare for confession was too short, Sœur Térèse answered, "You should remember, dear sister, that a Carmelite ought always to be ready to confess, to communicate, and to die."

Great was the happiness of the Mistress of the Novices when any of her daughters reached the end of their training, and in faithfulness and love took upon them their full vows. She took special delight in sharing the vigil before the Blessed Sacrament which each novice kept on the night before her profession; nothing could induce her to give up this, which she called her right, and once when, being really ill, she was pressed to depute the office to some one else, she answered, "No, dear Sisters, I have a right to offer my children to the Lord, and I am too jealous of such a right to lose it for the sake of a cold!"

One necessary duty of her post was sometimes a great trial to Sœur Térèse: that of dismissing persons whose vocation was imperfect or not genuine, and to whom true kindness lay in rejection. Her power of reading character, and examining into vocation was great, and she took pains to lead those who were under her to study their vocation diligently for themselves. The whole subject was made a subject of constant general instruction to the novitiate, and then each individual was carefully taught and counselled

apart as to the purity of motive which ought to guide her in her vocation, and the duty of answering simply and fully to God's Voice. "Remember, *ma sœur*," she said to a certain postulant, "that God will require you to give account of your vocation if it is His inspiration. It will not do to say, 'If I am dismissed, it is not my fault that I do not become a religious.' It may be your fault if you do not do everything in your power to co-operate with grace; and this grace is God's gift, which you must cherish, so that it may bring forth fruit."

Writing to the same pupil, on the eve of her profession, *Sœur Térèse* says, "I rejoice to think that you are about to become the bride of Jesus Christ; but I would have you still ponder very seriously on what you are doing. Will you have strength and courage to practise all your life those duties which have cost you so much during your novitiate? Undoubtedly the good God Whom we serve deserves at our hands all we can suffer for Him, and there is nothing we can be called on to endure which Jesus has not borne for us. Keep Him ever before your mental vision as your strength and your example; strive to accustom yourself always to realise His Holy Presence, and make use of your quiet moments for constant loving intercourse with Him. The thought of all His mercies shown to you amid

the trials which He has sent to strengthen your vocation, will be food for constant tender appeals to Him, and the fire of love which has already so long filled your heart will be kept alive by the preference you are about to give Him to all that might be dearest to you in this world, to say nothing of mere fortune and its worldly advantages. I venture to predict that your heart will be more and more inflamed with the purest ardour, and that you will experience that blessedness which can only come from love of Jesus, and from being wholly His."

Sœur Térèse was especially particular as to the vocation of those postulants who were of noble birth or large fortune, dreading very much lest such endowments should prove a snare. "We can get on without high birth or riches," she used to say, "but we cannot do without vocation." Writing to a lady whose vocation seemed doubtful, and who pressed the Mistress of the Novices to decide her future course, she says, "Your call does not depend upon me, but upon God; strive to prepare your heart by purity of intention and earnest desire to know His Holy Will, to realise and hear His Voice within you. . . . All I can tell you is, that I am more happy than my highest visions had ever anticipated in the religious life, but I cannot undertake to promise that it will be the same with you, unless I possessed what

I certainly do not—the power to see further into your heart than you see yourself. All I can do, is to advise you to seek counsel of our Lord, praying earnestly that He will enlighten you. I will join my prayers to yours, and if you like, we will begin a novena to-morrow with this object. If after that you do not see your way clearly and satisfactorily, I will undertake to make everything easy for your return to the world. God forbid that your first step in the religious life should be a stumble for want of a positive vocation.”

A young lady, who only knew *Sœur Térèse* by reputation, wrote to consult her as to entering upon the religious life. The answer was as follows: “The frankness and truthfulness with which you write, *Mademoiselle*, lead me to answer you as truthfully, though without affecting in any way to come to a decision on your behalf. From the description you give of yourself, it seems to me that your natural disposition is easy, which increases the difficulty of working out one’s salvation in the world, especially when one is surrounded, as you are, by all that birth and fortune can give. Not that I mean at all to say that holiness is impossible under such circumstances. Every condition in life, and every shade of character, will find its own place in Heaven, if we are but faithful in our correspondence with God’s Grace. The

lives of the saints prove this clearly; we find their example in every condition of life, and what they have done, we may do also. But an easy nature runs greater risks. On the other hand, such a nature finds it harder to overcome the difficulties which beset the beginning of the religious life than some others do; still, when the beginning is made, and everything tends to promote a growth in holiness, we may fairly hope that such an easy character will be wholly moulded to virtue, and attain to great sanctification. The fear you seem to entertain as to your salvation is a good motive, but it ought not to be the only one; it should be united to love of God, to the desire of possessing Him, and of giving all to our Lord, as He gave all for us. I make these slight suggestions, which you will doubtless enlarge upon in your own thoughts, but above all, I earnestly counsel you to take no steps without earnestly and diligently intreating God's Holy Spirit to enlighten your heart, so that you may be able to know and to do whatever is God's Will with respect to your future."

Fully occupied as *Sœur Tère*se was at this time with her conventual duties, she was not left undisturbed from without. Every one who had a petition to present connected with any ecclesiastical matter, thought they had a right to claim the patronage of

the Carmelite Princess, and she was often quite oppressed with letters and applications. Anything that she could do to forward the cause of religion, Sœur Térèse was ready to do, and thus she interested herself actively on behalf of the Reformed Carmelite Fathers in France, obtaining the Pope's sanction to their separation from the communities which had relaxed the rule, and declined to renew its strict observance. When it was a question of material relief, she generally passed on the applicants to her sisters, the Princesses, who were always ready to carry out her wishes to their utmost possibility. Even a Princess sometimes finds herself in the same perplexity as other liberal givers, and accordingly, we find Sœur Térèse writing to an applicant, "I will commend you to my sisters, but it cannot be till after All Saints. They have the kindest hearts in the world, but they are so generous, that just when they would most gladly give, their purses are often empty." But when Sœur Térèse was asked to apply for appointments, or to solicit patronage, she steadily refused. "I have taken my line long since," she writes to the Abbé Bertin, "and in renouncing everything, I renounced even the power of helping others. What I can no longer do from without, I would strive to do by prayer, not by any merits of my own, but through His Merits to Whom I have consecrated

myself. . . . I cannot possibly recommend this ecclesiastic to the Archbishop. I never in all my life recommended any one to a cure of souls, and you will believe that I am not likely to begin now. All I can do is to pray. . . . Knowing my mind as you do, you did well to assert that I should be very sorry to meddle with any Bishopric in any way whatever, and thank God, I have no such responsibility on my conscience."

The Bishop of Clermont, for whom Sœur Térèse had a warm regard, wrote to ask her to interest herself in behalf of a relation. "I have seldom felt more grieved," she replied, "than I am to-day not to be able to do what you ask with respect to this appointment to S. Cyr, especially as the young lady is your relative. But you know I do not meddle with any such matters, and lately I have been obliged to refuse a multitude of people asking similar favours. One had need love one's religious life heartily not to regret having renounced everything I quite understand that you could not refuse to apply to me, but I am sure you must have anticipated my answer, knowing my way of thinking, and how entirely I have done with all temporal affairs; if the matter had been a purely religious one, I should gladly have seconded your apostolic zeal. But this is merely a question of the worldly distinctions connected with high birth, and the portion I sought here is that of

humility and poverty. So I can do nothing but pray that all things may work together for the greater glory of God."

Another time she wrote to the Abbé Bertin, "I take this line less from fear of refusal or rebuff, which I would willingly bear for God's Sake, than because of the inevitable dissipation which external affairs involve." And Sœur Julie writes to the Sisters of another convent on her behalf, "Sœur Térèse de Saint Augustin is quite determined as to her being no longer connected with the world. . . . Such a resolution taken by a strong character is generally lasting, and I see it is useless to urge her any further. This devout Princess begs you to give the answer she makes us all give, namely, that she interferes with nothing secular. She only seeks to be left at peace in her self-renunciation and solitude." In the same spirit of retirement, the Princess sets a careful check upon her correspondence, not indulging in what was unnecessary, even when it might be edifying. Thus she writes to the Bishop of Clermont, "It is a great pleasure to me to receive your letters; I wish that your pastoral zeal and the multitude of duties our life involves permitted of a more frequent correspondence; I am sure it would be greatly to the benefit of my soul, but it would be very difficult, and as one must turn everything to account for one's

spiritual welfare, I follow the line of sacrifice. If I were to give up so much time to writing, the observance of rule must suffer; and I believe that to be more useful both to myself and to others than writing, in which I am sure you will agree with me, especially when I honestly confess that after one has lived at Court for thirty years, it is this perfect observance of rule which costs one most, not so much as a matter of fatigue, as because it involves so much subjection."

Visits too were as much checked as was consistent with kindness, and though her warm sisterly affection for Mesdames de France never grew one whit less, Sœur Terèse was sometimes heard to say, "Every time my sisters leave me to go back to Versailles, I find myself blessing God that I have not to go back too." The King's visits, however, were never in any way repulsed, his daughter was only too thankful for every opportunity of seeing him, and exerting all her loving influence to fan the flame of piety which she longed to see kindling his soul. They frequently had conversation on religious subjects, which generally began by Louis XV. expressing his great astonishment at the Princess's content and happiness in so strict a life, a surprise which was continually renewed. Sometimes the talk would last so long that the King would break it off hastily, saying, "They will think

that we are discussing state affairs." He was always very courteous and considerate to the community, coming at the least inconvenient hours, and forbidding any ceremony to be used in receiving him, so that very often his presence in the convent was scarcely known among the nuns. If in the house when the hour for Vespers or Benediction came, His Majesty used to attend the service. The Superiors had arranged an apartment for the King's use, but he not unfrequently spent his visit in Madame Louise's cell by preference. Sometimes he would order the best fish from the royal kitchen at Versailles to be put into his carriage, and on arriving say, "Here, my dear child, I have brought you my fish, I would not trust it to any one else, for fear it should never reach you." The King often brought provisions as a present to the community, saying, "I have brought my own luncheon, for fear I should inconvenience the house." When he sat down to table, he would say to his daughter, "Put the doors open, your nuns will like to see the King eat." One day he made some coffee for himself in his apartment, and said to Madame Louise, "Perhaps your Sisters would like to have some?" He was very much surprised when she told him that the rule forbade Carmelites to drink coffee, and that consequently no one in the house could accept it, even from His Majesty.

Another day, the King wanted to open a pot of jam, and took out his pocket-knife to cut the string which tied it up. The Mother S. Alexis who was present, could not keep silent under such an infraction of her rule, and involuntarily she made a gesture to stop the King, exclaiming, "Sire ! for the sake of holy poverty !"* Louis XV., all amazed, remained with his knife in one hand and the jam pot in the other, awaiting some explanation. It was with some difficulty that he was made to understand how the bit of string which would be good for nothing when cut, might be used again, if it was carefully untied ! He was pleased to hear Sœur Terèse de Saint Augustin praised for her devotion and regular observance of rule ; though during his visits she was obliged to postpone her conventual duties and attend to her Royal father. One day while the King was sitting with her, three o'clock struck, and the bell rang ; Louis XV. inquired what it meant, and the Princess told him that it was the signal at which all Carmelites prostrated themselves to adore our blessed Lord in His Agony, dying on the Cross. The King knew that several Sisters were occupied near to his apartment, so he went quietly out to see what they were doing, and was impressed by finding them all in prayer.

• "Sire ! et la sainte pauvreté !"

CHAPTER VI.

SŒUR TÉRÈSE DE SAINT AUGUSTIN had flattered herself that when once her profession was made she would never again hear herself called "Madame;" but it was not easy to lose the habit, and her old title still frequently greeted her ear. Writing to one of the Superiors of the convent, she says, "Do not be surprised if I address you as '*Monsieur*;' I dare not call you 'Father' while you call me 'Madame.' But you know that the title I bear in religion is more precious to me than any I could possibly have in the world." And to another Visitor she wrote, "I am distressed, my Reverend Father, to think that I should cause any embarrassment to my Superior; but in time I hope you will see that there is nothing to be afraid of, and that Sœur Térèse de S. Augustin is the same as any other Carmelite, always excepting that she is the unworthiest of all. I have a good will, but in order

to make some little progress, I would intreat you to give me your counsels and prayers." The Princess complained to Louis XV. that she was still called *Madame*, and he answered, "I am not surprised that they find it difficult to call you 'Sister,' though they would have you as one, but the next thing will be something different, and whether you will or no." The King meant that his daughter would be elected Prioress, and he was not wrong, though probably his reasons, and those which really caused the election, were altogether different. In his eyes, a Princess was the rightful Superior of her Sisters, but in those of the community, Madame Louise's claims to the chief office among them lay in her saintliness, her humility, her earnestness, and her intense obedience to rule.

The Reverend Mère S. Alexis reached the end of her six years' charge, re-election being possible at the end of three years, but a third period is not allowed to the same nun. Accordingly the whole community was unanimous in selecting Sœur Térèse de S. Augustin as her successor; and the election took place, November 27, 1773. Probably no one within the convent walls expected that the appointment would be acceptable to the Princess; she said but little of her conscious unworthiness, and her real reluctance to plunge into fresh duties, instead of fol-

lowing the life of silence and solitude she had counted on when entering Saint Denis. To one of the Visitors she observed, "When one is elected Prioress after having been professed only two years, one has good reason to tremble. My only trust is in the obedience I have vowed to God and to my Superiors; through His Grace I hope I may be faithful to that, and always be a submissive daughter to you, my Reverend Fathers." All the community rejoiced, but the novices' joy was considerably marred at the prospect of losing their mistress—a loss which she thought more than supplied by appointing Sœur Julie, her own "*ange*," to take her place.

Louis XV. evidently took great interest in the matter, and wished his daughter to be elected. Knowing when the election was to be, he sent a courier to Saint Denis to bring him the result. The Bishop of Dax and the Abbé Bertin were both prepared to take the tidings to the King; the former went to Versailles, and on his reception, said, "Sire, Madame Louise has been elected Prioress of her community, and that with only one dissentient voice." Louis XV. answered rather sharply, "So there was one dissentient voice? There must always be some one setting up a line of their own, even in a convent!" "In this case, Sire," the Bishop replied, "it was Madame who set up a line of her

own, for the one dissentient voice was hers." At this the King brightened, and turning to the Court grouped around, he said, "I have to inform you, gentlemen, that Madame Louise has just been elected Prioress of her community, and what pleases me most is that it has assuredly been done without any cabal, for she did not wish to be elected." Louis XV. made haste to go and congratulate his daughter on her new position; he expressed his satisfaction at finding her willing to give up her own wishes, adding that he was glad to find that she had the true spirit of her vocation sufficiently to be raised to such a post. "In truth, dear papa," she replied, "I would rather have been able to give myself up to seeking my own salvation, for although my kingdom is but a little one, I feel that any one who is called to govern must render very solemn account to God."

There was no affectation of false humility in the regret which Madame Louise expressed at her early appointment. She honestly thought herself unfit for the task, and looked on to the end of the three years at which her term of office expired, (unless she were re-elected for another three years,) saying, "After that we shall have no more such folly, I hope." Writing to the Prioress of another community, she says, "I dread everything which recalls my former rank, and I am so afraid of its being a stumbling-

block, that I often avoid even what is good when I am afraid it may remind either myself or others of it. I would I had not been a King's daughter. I think I should have been a better Carmelite ; at all events, I should have escaped being a Prioress, for, with all due respect to the conscientiousness of my good Sisters, it was certainly Madame Louise whom they elected, not Sœur Térèse de S. Augustin." And one day, when the nuns were talking of the inclination Madame Elisabeth showed to the religious life, her aunt remarked, " If Elisabeth should become a Carmelite, I hope she will be treated as I ought to have been, and remain a long time in the ranks."

The duties of her new position which involved rebuking others, giving her individual opinion, or presiding in the chapter, were so intensely trying to her, that no one could look at her without seeing the signs of her inward struggles on her countenance, and in spite of earnest prayer for strength, at times she could hardly conquer the extreme difficulty she felt in taking her position at the head of the community. Thus, on one occasion, when the community was assembled, waiting for the Prioress to address them on certain matters, she was so completely overwhelmed and felt so physically unable to do what was required of her, that she sent for the Mother S. Alexis and Sœur Julie, that they might see how

unequal she was to the required exertion, and tell her what to do. They advised her to combat the weakness, and she at once submitted, saying, "In truth, if I were to exempt myself to-day, it would be all the worse a week hence, and it would end by it becoming simply impossible." The customary marks of respect shown to the Prioress were a source of constant distress to her; thus she contrived always to be the first to appear at all community gatherings, in order that the Sisters might not rise upon her entrance, and if she was unable to go into the refectory with the rest, she would slip in by a little side door which was close to her place. On one occasion, forgetting her office, the Prioress came in late by the usual door, and her discomfort on seeing all the nuns rise to receive her was so great, that she coloured violently, and hurried to her seat with the old vivacity of Madame Louise. She was always on the watch to avoid being treated with any special attentions or consideration. At meals, she would often reject the portion of food prepared for her, and take that allotted to some one else, fancying that some preference was shown to her. She would not accept any little extra services, and could not even bear the nuns to pick up for her any little trifle that she might drop. Nothing pleased her so much as to be in no way distinguished from the other Sisters.

At the time of the Princess's election, the convent buildings were almost in a state of ruin, and she set to work at once upon reparations and restorations, going into every detail, and superintending all the works herself, uncongenial, and indeed utterly untried hitherto as they were to her. One day, as she stood for some time giving directions to two workmen concerning some part of the building, one of them answered her, not disrespectfully, but very freely, "Yes, yes, *ma sœur*." The Prioress departed, and his fellow-labourer said directly, "Do you know who you were talking to?" "Why, who?" "Madame Louise of France!" The workman let his tools fall out of his hands. "Madame Louise of France!" he exclaimed, "why, whatever shall I do?" Then, after a moment of mixed astonishment and vexation, he added, picking up his tools, "But, after all, it wasn't my fault; what business has she to look for all the world just like any of the rest of them?"

The Prioress retained her fear of being unconsciously still the Princess, as *Sœur Térése* had done, and when, as sometimes happened, she was betrayed into what appeared to herself imperious words, her penitence and humility were touching in the extreme. For instance, one day a Sister in charge of the needle-work complained, as the Prioress thought, rather unreasonably of the clumsiness and slowness of one

of the novices. "You might complain in the same way of me," she answered, "it is unfortunate that her father, as well as mine, neglected to have us taught to sew." The words were no sooner said, than they struck her as proud and unfitting, and instantly the Prioress knelt down and begged pardon of the Sister for having set so bad an example by her want of humility. On another occasion, when the community was assembled at recreation, one of the nuns being summoned to the parloir, the summons was not attended to at once as it ought to have been, while the Sister lingered to hear the end of something which interested her. The Prioress at last noticed it, telling the Sister that she should not keep those who sent for her waiting. In a momentary forgetfulness, the Sister retorted, "I am sure, Mother, you often keep people waiting for you." "It is possible," was the answer, "but perhaps the reasons are different."

The Sister went off to the parloir, but the Prioress, self-convicted of insufficient humility, hastened to kneel down before the rest, and beg pardon for having given them an example of pride, adding, "I was always very proud, and now, though I have forsaken the externals of pride, I am still beset with the foolish sensitiveness of self-love."

She used to deprecate earnestly whatever ap-

proached to flattery. "It is not worthy of Christians, above all of religious," she would say to her children, "to lay snares for one another by flattery; all the time men praise us for seeming virtues, God is condemning us for real faults." Some of them were speaking one day of the respect and esteem in which she was held by a certain Abbess. "I know how much all that is worth," the Prioress observed, "and how wonderful all I do has become since I have set up such a name for goodness;"—quoting the proverb, "*Bonne renommée qui vaut mieux que ceinture dorée.*" Fearing lest her own watchfulness should be insufficient, the Prioress not only invited all the community, even to the youngest novice, to tell her of her faults of omission or commission; she further insisted on Sœur Julie's resuming her old office of "ange," as she still called her, or "zelatrice," and would not rest satisfied without the most minute advice and direction from this Sister, who was studiously to be on the watch for her Superioress's slightest errors. The Prioress herself continually strove to kindle her *zelatrice's* vigilance; thus when, after her annual retreat, Sœur Julie submitted her resolutions in writing to the Prioress, they were returned with the remark, "Your resolutions were not quite complete, and one you had left out is so important that I have added it for you." This addition proved to

be, "And I will be faithful in rebuking our Mother for all her faults."

Yet the Princess was exceedingly sensitive, and easily wounded when anything had hurt her, as she admitted once to the Abbé Bertin, saying, "Away with sensitiveness. I have tried to lay it all down at the foot of the Cross; as to what there was in this matter to offer to God, it was soon done, I only thought of it twice when telling you. I look upon such things as so many wasps, to be driven away as fast as possible." In all external observances, the Prioress was foremost in her duties, considering no occupation as beneath her, and persisting in fulfilling all the lowliest as well as the most toilsome. She always gloried in the rule by which in a Carmelite house the Prioress's name comes first on the list of sweeping Sisters, and when her own share of sweeping was done, she would sometimes do other people's share too; nor would she give up her share of washing up after meals, or in the laundry. Sometimes she would spend hours in the cold, sharing the labours of the Sisters whose duty it was to arrange the newly washed linen in its appointed garrets; and as her strength did not allow her to carry the heavy things up there, she used to say, "It is because of my hump that they won't let me carry the *hotte*." The lay Sisters were often amazed at their Superioress's

humility, and they all loved her dearly. She was much gratified at a little proof of confidence on the part of one who, having to rouse the community at an unusually early hour on Easter Day, and being in despair as to how she should ever wake in time, bethought her of the Prioress as her best hope. Unhesitating, the good lay Sister went to her, and told her trouble, adding, "After thinking it all over, Mother, I am sure I can't reckon on anybody but you to wake me." Accordingly the next morning, the Prioress carefully fulfilled her promise, and called the lay Sister, that she might rouse the community. Among the lay Sisters there was a young girl, who, on her arrival as a postulant, was so remarkable for her gentleness and simplicity, that the Sisters were all delighted with her, and kept saying, "*Qu'elle est donc aimable;*"—whereupon the Prioress resolved to call her *Sœur Amable*. Being obliged to stay up very late at night, and consequently sleepy in the morning, the Prioress who wanted to be aroused an hour before the rest of the community, confided the charge of calling her to *Sœur Amable*. The little lay Sister used to knock without waking her Superioress; she would try again, and then go away, secretly glad that the already short rest of her Mother should not be made shorter. But that did not please the Prioress, and when, on being questioned,

- Sœur Amable represented the difficulty of her task, she was told, "Well, if you can't wake me with knocking, come in; and if nothing else will do, pull me out of bed."

Her estimate of the value of work was high, and although her official duties might have entitled her to claim exemption from voluntary manual work, the Prioress would have thought it her own loss to claim any such exemption. She used to say that actual labour was essential to the religious life, and involved by the vow of poverty. "To work and to pray, that is our business," she often said, "and if I were to sit a moment with my hands before me, I should cease to be a Carmelite." Accordingly, whenever other duties did not engross her, the Prioress might be found occupied with some work, the coarser the better—spinning, mending old linen, or old clothes, even the old sandals worn by the nuns.

When Sœur Térèse de la Miséricorde was a novice, she chanced to go into the Princess's cell, (who was then Mistress of the Novices,) and finding a lay Sister there, who had brought with her the odour of some dirty work recently in hand, she made some comment upon it, a piece of refinement for which she met with a kindly rebuke. Her mistress was at the time engaged in spinning some very coarse grey wool, and she added, "I should think you found the smell

of this wool very nasty too, but when you have acquired the true spirit of a Carmelite, you will change your mind."

Even when summoned to the parloir, the Prioress would take some work to do as she talked; and one day while thus receiving the Abbé Proyart, she explained the noise which her work made behind the grille, saying, "If I do not catch every minute, I get behind hand, and cannot make it up again." "As soon as I have finished one thing, I feel that God calls me to another," she would say, "and another, and so on, and thus I could not remain idle a moment without positively resisting the voice of conscience which perpetually bids me use time to gain eternity." Mending was a favourite form of industry with her, and the *ci-devant* Princess had so patched her habit with pieces of different shades, put in with odds and ends of thread of all kinds, that one of the nuns intreated her to have a new one, saying that it was really a shame to the community for their Prioress to be seen in such a condition by the Royal family. "How long has it been a shame to live according to the spirit of our vows?" was all the answer. "My family all know perfectly that I have taken the vow of poverty, and that it behoves me in my present office to set an example of it in all things." Another day one of the novices finding her with a tattered

veil, playfully remarked that she did not despair of seeing her Prioress receive the King with a dish-cloth on her head by way of a veil! "Well," answered the Prioress, "I would willingly do so rather than depart in anything from the simplicity Saint Teresa has taught us to practise."

Her asceticism in eating by no means diminished after her promotion, and it became a proverbial expression that a thing "was so bad, that la Mère Térèse de Saint Augustin herself could not eat it!" The long morning fast always tried her severely, and yet if any one wanted her when dinner time came, she was always ready to wait still longer. One day a novice happened to go to her just before dinner, and was so struck with her Superioress's pallor that she could not refrain from asking the cause of her looking so ill? "Oh it is nothing, it only means that my stomach awaits its dinner with great impatience!" was the answer. Sometimes when this impatience made itself very urgently felt, the Prioress would go and get herself a little bit of bread from the basket where the remains of the last evening's meal had been collected. She was so occupied one morning when another nun came to the refectory with the same object, and happening to take up a bit of bread which bore marks of having touched some other eatable, she showed it with an expression of disgust to

the Prioress, who, in reply, quietly took the piece of bread and cut off the outside, which she ate, returning the rest to the Sister, saying, "A stain of egg or of beetroot cannot hurt a Carmelite much." She continued carefully to conceal her aversion for certain articles of food—that for fish remained as strong as in the early days of Madame Louise's postulate, and as the fish consumed in the convent was ordinarily bought more with a view to cheapness than excellence, it was apt to send forth so strong an odour, as to take away all appetite even from the nuns who were used to such fare, and yet could scarcely touch it. Nevertheless the Prioress would eat her portion without a complaint; and in the same way she persisted in not rejecting eggs cooked after a particular fashion, which was most distasteful to her; and when a former member of her household chanced to tell the Sisters of the Princess's former aversion, and they wanted to alter the way of cooking in question, she would not allow it, saying, "No, indeed, I have fought against my fancifulness for seven years, and I hope to conquer; but if I give way in the least now, I shall be beaten!"

Nor were such things as these the greatest triumphs over sensuality, which this once fastidious Princess achieved. We are told that one day she dropped an egg she had just cracked into some dirty water, and persisted in fishing it up again and eating it, saying.

“it was contrary to holy poverty to waste it;” and that on another occasion, when a Sister brought an egg, the smell of which told its own tale without her indignant complaint, the Prioress silently gave her own egg to the Sister, and proceeded to eat that which she rejected. Again, being once too late for the Sisters’ dinner, she was dining at the second table, when a lay Sister came to show the fragments given as her portion, which she said were disgustingly nasty. The Prioress examined the plate, endorsed the complaint, and ordered something else to be provided for the Sister, while she herself ate the objectionable portion. Another day, the cook, when preparing some artichokes for dinner, put aside one that was quite rotten and unfit to eat, but she forgot to tell the “*provisoire*,” whose business it was to distribute the food, and this plate was taken with the rest to the refectory. The lay Sister who was acting as cook did not miss the uneatable portion till after dinner, when, finding how the matter stood, she at once came to the conclusion that no one but the Prioress would have eaten anything so abominable! Inquiry proved the justice of her supposition, the Prioress had indeed eaten a part of it—not even she could manage it all—and when the cook came to her in an agony of distress and excuses, the only rebuke she encountered was, “Never mind this time, fortunately

it came to me, and with my good appetite, it did not matter ; only take care another time, because of our sick Sisters, or those who are easily disgusted."

At last, the lay Sisters grew desperate, finding that they could never induce the Prioress to profit at all by their many well-intentioned attempts to nourish her better than she thought fit. All their little plots and manoeuvres were frustrated, and they determined to make a formal complaint to the King at the very first opportunity. This soon presented itself, and accordingly, one lay Sister, as the representative of all the rest, having waylaid Louis XV., proffered her petition. "Sire, we wish to complain of our Mother, who will not accept the food served to her in the refectory, because we try to sustain her royal stomach with something better than the rest, but if she sees *des yeux* in her soup, directly she empties her plate into the common pot." The King, knowing his daughter's mind as to all such things, only answered, "She is quite right." Upon which, the poor lay Sister fairly lost her temper, and went away, grumbling, "Well, to be sure, if you are going to uphold her, there is no good in telling you anything !"

The days in which such an appeal was possible were nearly over. Not many months after Madame Louise became Prioress of S. Denis, her Royal father's visits were discontinued in consequence of his severe

illness, which soon assumed a character that left no hope of recovery. Madame Louise had always been a most affectionate daughter, and her solicitude now was doubtless increased by her necessary absence from the King's sick-bed, which, however, was most tenderly watched by his other daughters, as she knew, and the succours she was able to offer were of a different kind.

The Archbishop of Paris authorised continual exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the convent church, and every possible moment that could rightly be taken from her other duties was spent by Madame Louise in prayer before the altar. Indeed, she could hardly be prevailed upon to take any sleep, so continual and urgent were her prayers, not for the King's restoration to health, but that he might be granted the grace of a holy death, and that his soul might be saved at the Last Great Day. So ceaseless were her prayers and austerities with this object, that her Sisters could not fail to mark with pain the effect produced on her health and countenance, and in their anxiety they had recourse to the Superiors of the convent. One of these remonstrated with the Princess, but throwing herself at his feet, she exclaimed, "Father, I will obey you in whatever you may command, but I intreat you to remember that the King is dying; remember, too, that in coming here, I had

his salvation as well as my own in view, and then tell me if it is possible for me to do too much on behalf of a soul which is so dear to me?" She sought eagerly the prayers, not only of her own community, but of all other religious houses, and, as may be supposed, the Sisters of S. Denis, who had learned to look upon Louis XV. as their personal friend and benefactor, entered warmly into their Prioress's wishes, and shared her prayers and vigils on his behalf with no little fervour. Amid all her sorrow and anxiety, they could not but notice and admire the steady way in which she persevered in all her duties, never omitting anything required of her, or allowing the smallest detail of her work as head of the convent to be left undone. When tidings reached S. Denis that the King had received the Sacraments, having previously written with his own hand his act of repentance of the many sins he had committed against God and his people, Madame Louise felt as though the best aim of her self-devotion were attained, and she was able calmly to await the last tidings.

Louis XV. died, holding a Crucifix sent him by his daughter Louise, and the Bishop of Senlis, who ministered to him to the last, was able to carry much that was soothing and consolatory to his absent daughter, his youngest and most fondly loved child. The Princesses were too much overwhelmed to write

themselves to their sister; they and the Comte de Provence commissioned the Duchesse de Beauvilliers to convey the tidings through Madame Louise's confessor, the Abbé du Ternay. These reached her about eight o'clock in the evening, when silence had begun in the house for the night; and when her first burst of grief was over, the Princess resolved to say nothing that night to the nuns, leaving them to learn the King's death on the morrow, while she herself would spend the night in prayer. But the prioress made the event known in the community, and they joined their prayers to those of their Prioress throughout the night, and the next morning, the office for the dead was said in choir, the Princess taking the lead as usual, in virtue of her office. The nuns were all more or less touched by the whole circumstances, especially by the deep sorrow of their Mother, who yet was so calm and steadfast in her grief, more so than themselves, for repeatedly their tears choked their words, and then her clear voice was heard repeating the appointed psalms all alone.

As they left the choir, Madame Louise received a letter from her nephew, now Louis XVI. "I could not write to you yesterday," he said, "we were all in too much grief. It was a terrible time, but still God's Grace was very great to him, and very com-

forting to us; he died holding the Crucifix, and himself saying some prayers. I am certain, my dear aunt, that God Who led you into your present life, will comfort you under this sorrow, and I intreat you, dear aunt, always to count upon my affection for you. When you are able, pray let me hear from you, in order that I may myself show all the attachment I feel for you."

Louis XV. was buried at S. Denis beside his Royal forefathers. The good nuns had wished to spare their Mother by concealing the time of his burial from her, but the military music and other sounds announced plainly both the time when the body arrived at S. Denis, and that at which it was placed in the royal vault. It was a night of great suffering to the Princess, who writes touchingly and simply of it to a friend; "I bore last night tolerably, when the King was brought to the abbey. They had put me into the most distant part of the house, but I heard everything. I slept, I cried, I prayed. I am quite well, that is all I have time to tell you; I cannot write so often, I must attend to the house. I shall bear this trial as well as those that have gone before. God Who sends them will be my strength." Offices were said for the departed King for a long time in the convent church, and, as she wrote to the Abbé Bertin, the thought that he had died in faith and

penitence, was a consolation above all else to his daughter.

A fresh anxiety arose almost immediately, the three Princesses being attacked successively with the same kind of illness of which their father died. "I have spent a sad afternoon," she wrote to an intimate friend, "but God has given me strength and courage. Be at rest as to my body and my heart; it suffers indeed, but it submits. Mine is an unusual trial, my father just gone from me, and my three sisters struck down with the same illness. But when sorrows come, one must trace out the Hand Which sends them, and adore It silently; and if such is a Christian's duty, how much more is it that of a religious, who has pledged herself to follow, not precepts only, but the counsels of perfection, '*et ce iusqu'à la mort.*'*" Pray for me, *mon cœur*, that I may never forget this. I have grown rather thin, but do not be anxious, and let us pray with all our might. . . . I dread the result of this illness, but my fear is a very calm one, and God gives me comfort in the thought that if my sisters die, they will be martyrs to their filial affection, which was so edifying. A little sooner or later, and it will be the same for us all: *Fiat Voluntas.*"

This trial, however, was spared her; the Princesses

* S. Teresa's form of vow.

all recovered, and as soon as possible came to see their sister, and share their tender memories and sorrows with her. Before that, the young Queen Marie Antoinette had been to see her; neither could speak much, but Madame Louise remarked gratefully the tender delicacy with which her Royal niece avoided speaking of Louis XVI. as "the King." He also came very soon with the Queen to S. Denis, and at all times both Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette took every opportunity of showing their love and respect for their Carmelite aunt. Not unfrequently, the Royal pair attended vespers in the choir on occasion of these visits, when Louis XVI., whose voice was very harsh and discordant, used to join in the chanting with more devotion than melody. One day as their Majesties left the choir, Marie Antoinette turned mischievously upon the Mère Elèonore, who was in attendance, and who was noted for her calm presence of mind, trying to perplex her by asking, "Does not the King sing well?" But the Mère Elèonore was not to be caught; she discreetly answered, "Madame, His Majesty sings with admirable fervour."

Among the restorations in which the present Prioress was engaged at S. Denis, the church stood foremost, and looking on to the time when it might be finished, she wrote to Cardinal de Bernis, asking

him to procure her a Crucifix and candlesticks for the high altar. When the Pope, Clement XIV., heard of this request, he immediately presented her with six very handsome silver candlesticks and a Crucifix, which had been removed from the Collegio Romano. Before his gift reached France, the donor was dead. Eventually these candlesticks and all other valuables belonging to the convent were carried to the mint by order of the convention in 1793.

After Louis XV.'s death, the Prioress felt that her last tie to the world was severed; his visits were always welcomed, but not so those of others, and she was very strict as to not allowing the inclosure to be broken. The rule permitted the sons and grandsons of the King to enter within it; but not so the princes of the blood. Thus, when Mesdames de France wished their sister to receive the Queen's father, she remarked that the Archduke was not a "fils de France," which alone could give him the right of entrance, unless indeed, travelling incognito, the King should introduce him under that name. "But after all," she added, no such case has ever occurred, for princes do not often have many acquaintance among the Carmelites, and our houses have nothing to excite their curiosity; it only happens when there is a creature like me, whom everybody wants to look at as a sort of *bœuf gras*." "I retain Madame

Louise's privilege in the parloir," she used to say, "and dismiss my visitors without hesitation, even in the midst of a conversation if it is too lengthy." Not that such a dismissal was ever ungraciously given. "You will believe that God Himself summons me, when I have heart to say, '*allez vous-en*' to you;" she said to one of her family when thus cutting short a visit; and on another occasion she said to the Archbishop of Paris, "I am sure, Monseigneur, you would scold me well, if the pleasure I have in your society were to lead me into neglecting any appointed duty?"

If, as she said, the Princess's rights were called out on such occasions, they were certainly most absolutely resigned in all that did not tend to promote God's Glory, and the good of souls. In a letter to the Prioress of another convent, who, having occasion to write frequently to her, always addressed her simply as "Reverend Mother," Madame Louise writes, "As to you, dear Mother, I really love you because your letters are not full of '*augusteries*' and titles!" All the ecclesiastical Superiors who visited the convent agreed that no religious could be found in the Order who was more entirely humble and obedient; she always observed the rule of kneeling to receive his blessing on first coming into the presence of a Superior, and she would have knelt through

all their intercourse if it had been permitted. Remembering, too, the Princess's natural strength and decision of character, and her long habits of independent will and judgment, the Superiors were all struck with her exceeding readiness to ask and follow advice, her mistrust of self, and her yielding docility to whatever they wished or suggested. Few things vexed her more than any compliments or eulogium of herself from the pulpit, such as she was occasionally condemned to hear from strange preachers. Going to the parloir one day to thank a celebrated orator who had just been preaching at Saint Denis, Madame Louise observed, "We thank you, sir, for your sermon, which was very fine, but it was rather like some kinds of fish, which are only good betwixt head and tail!"—meaning that the praise of herself with which the preacher began and ended, had spoilt the rest. Another day, when speaking to an ecclesiastic who was going to preach in the convent church, she said, "I hope you will not imitate some of your colleagues, whose only object seems to be to humiliate me!" and as the preacher did not seem disposed to take the hint, she added, "At all events, if you will have us Carmelites to be '*dames*,' don't excite jealousies, but say '*Mesdames*.'"

Hearing of a State visit paid by the Queen Marie Antoinette to S. Geneviève, the Prioress wrote to the

Abbé Rigaud, "Well, my father, you have had grand doings in your street! I feel sure that you said to yourself, 'How fortunate Sœur Tèrese de Saint Augustin is not to be there any longer! Her straw chair will be a nobler throne for her, if she knows how to use it well, than that which is prepared at the Hôtel de Ville for the Queen, and her serge habit will shine more brightly hereafter than all this magnificence.' So be it, mon Père. Of one thing I am sure, that nothing ever worn by a Carmelite on her high festival days is half so inconvenient as what I have had to wear at Court on such occasions; yet all that was good for nothing as regards heaven, whereas here, everything, even to the very dust, may become as so many diamonds for me hereafter. How shall I render my account if I do not gather them up carefully?" In this spirit, which surely takes away all dryness and harshness from asceticism and mortification, investing them indeed, as Madame Louise said, with the brightness and sparkle of jewels,—she found the opportunity of offering up a willing sacrifice to God in almost every instant of her life; but the point which pre-eminently strikes one in all such offerings is, that they were not made as the sacrifices exacted by a stern taskmaster, or in a gloomy spirit of expiation, but with a free spirit which delighted in pouring out whatever it could

seize or obtain, at the Feet of One Who was more than all beside to the loving heart which thus rejoiced to lavish its very best for His dear Sake. This animating motive made all her privations, penances, self-abnegations into real joy and happiness to her, while she assumed no merit to herself because of them, nothing could be farther from her thoughts. "The world," she wrote, "is very ready to canonise one for a mighty small thing; the moment that one leaves off being what it is, it gives one credit for being all one ought to be; but God's judgment is very different from that of man. One may prove that one is dreadfully afraid of losing one's soul in the world, by the one great sacrifice of quitting it, but it is by little daily sacrifices that we can prove our pure longing to please our Heavenly Bridegroom, and can we possibly hesitate or draw back when there is anything that such as we can offer to Him?" It was in this spirit that *Sœur Térèse* very frequently renewed her solemn act of consecration to God, delighting to repeat her vows. The Superioress of another community having asked her for the form of these vows, she wrote, saying, "It gives me real pleasure to write out our vows for you; I should like to write them continually, so as to try if possible to draw these precious bonds still tighter. The oftener I write or renew them, the more thankful and happy I

am to have taken them. No earthly crown can give such content as they do, even in this life. Forgive these irrelevant words, they come from the depths of my heart." Often she would repeat to her spiritual daughters, "We ought not to consider whether we like what we are going to do or not, but only whether it is enjoined upon us by our rule, or required of us by our Lord. These two considerations are enough to do away with all reluctance, or at all events, to diminish it considerably." This reverence for the rule, not merely that of the Order generally, but of the local rules of the individual house, was so strong in the Royal Prioress, that she could not bear to have the least change made in the latter, even where it belonged to her by right of her office to make such alterations as might seem advisable. She discouraged the principle of criticising or discussing what had been established by her predecessors, and if pressed to improve upon any rule, she would say, "No, no, trying to mend often only worsens," (*"Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien,"*) adding that it was better to try and improve one's own perfection of observance than to try to improve the rule. One detail of this perfect observance on which she dwelt earnestly was *punctuality*, which, so she often said, "was a real sacrifice to one's nature, and a real proof of love to God." She used to teach her Sisters to be ready a few

minutes before the appointed hour for any devotional exercises, so that they might be the better prepared for what they were about to do. One day she reproved a Sister for her constant unpunctuality, which was explained to be in consequence of the clock not being heard in the place where the delinquent was occupied. "Why did you not tell me sooner?" the Prioress asked, "I can be your clock," and from that day forth she kept her word, and regularly went to call the Sister at the proper time. "Our dear Lord cares much more for our fidelity than for our austerity," she used to say, "and no austerity is so hard to practise as a continual and unremitting punctuality and exactness. Do not let us weary of it, let us follow Christ wheresoever He calls us ; do not let us make false pretences with Him, or be afraid to give ourselves up to Him. His yoke is easy, and His burden light." And she would refer to the devotion and promptitude with which her Royal father's courtiers served him, as an example of the diligent service due to the King of kings.

If any Sister was absent at the first morning prayers, the Prioress always went herself to see what had detained her, and she was very particular about all the offices being said fervently and with recollection, not as a merely mechanical proceeding. "Where love is, nothing is thought a trouble," she would say.

"A moment of toil, and an eternity of rest," was another favourite remark. It so chanced that the Prioress's own cell was about the dullest and most inconvenient in the house; the window fitted so badly that it had to be stuffed up with paper, or the wind blew out her lamp, but although so many reparations were going on in the convent, the Prioress never had anything done to her own cell. Knowing how their good Mother suffered from the cold, and aware that her cell was even colder than the rest, one of the nuns used to try and warm it a little by carrying a small stove there during the Mother's absence, but being detected, the indulgence was forbidden for the future. "What are the people outside to do?" she asked, "if even Carmelites take so much trouble to protect themselves from the weather God sends?" Being one day somewhat seriously ill, the nuns wished to move their Mother into the apartment which had been reserved for the King, so that her family might visit her more conveniently, but she would not consent to their wish. When the Princesses came to see her, they joined in pressing their sister to move, saying that she would be so much more comfortable in that room. "Oh, as to being more comfortable, there is no doubt of that," the Prioress answered, "but one doesn't come here to be comfortable, and whether well or ill, one must never forget that one is a Carmelite."

After the Princesses were gone, she told the *Infirmières* that if she were to become very ill, and her sisters pressed it, they perhaps ought to yield and move her, but if such were to be the case, they must move a bed from the infirmary for her, as she could not consent to use any other.

Although the Princess always spoke of herself as so well and strong, her health was not really good, and probably if she had not acted upon her principle that "a religious should not easily fancy herself ill," she would much oftener have been incapacitated for her duties than was the case. But she was subject to gout, which occasionally caused great pain in her feet, and at times she suffered very much from oppression of breathing, which, added to her natural love of fresh air, (as a girl, her great enjoyment was in hunting, and out-of-door pursuits,) made the inclosed life of the Carmel often very trying to her. At times she was unable to remain in the choir through the offices, and was obliged to go to the porch, and join in the services from there, where she could breathe better; often the close air of the recreation-hall oppressed her sadly, but she would not allow the windows to be opened on her account, however much she longed for air, when she knew that some of the delicate Sisters would be inconvenienced. always saying that she could bear the discomfort

better than they could. In the same way, though she suffered greatly from being long in the infirmary, where the want of air nearly exhausted her, she always persevered steadily in fulfilling her duties there. Sœur Raphael in her early days was beset by a nervous fear of the dead—very unnatural for so excellent a religious, one fancies—and when there had been a death in the house, she was sure to be in so timid a condition that her only comfort was to carry her mattress into the Prioress's cell and sleep there. This was a real sacrifice on the part of the latter, and she once said half laughing, "Really, *ma sœur*, you should keep all your fears for winter, it is so stifling in here for two of us!" All these infirmities, however, were concealed as far as possible, and it was often only by her worn pale face that the nuns were able to discover that their Mother had passed, as she continually did, a sleepless night, or was in actual pain. If, on such occasions, they pressed her to rest a little in the morning, she would reply, "Don't you see, if I were to miss the service, the whole house would charitably persist in making me out to be ill, while really I am only a little uncomfortable." One day a Sister pressed her to exempt herself from some observance which was prejudicial to her health; but the Prioress answered that the evil was not sufficient to require a dispensation; "and besides," she added,

"I ought to be more particular than any one not to do anything that could tend to encourage laxity in the house." "But nobody need know that you are exempted," the Sister pleaded. The Prioress turned quite sharply upon her, "Would you have me be a hypocrite? God forbid that I should ever do that in His Sight which I would not be seen to do by His creatures! Let us always do what we ought, and then we shall never be afraid to appear as we are!"

Many little loving devices were invented by the Sisters to spare their Mother, but she generally contrived to defeat them all. Thus the Sister whose duty it was to waken the community, used to contrive so as not to rouse the Prioress when she was known to be ill; but the Mother could not bear this, and desired another nun always to come to her cell if she was not present when the "*Veni sancte Spiritus*" of the morning office began. "If I am well," she said, "it is my duty to be up like the rest; and if I am ill, I am better up, because I am sure only to be in an unresting sleep, more tiring than to be awake." When really ill, she would never leave any part of her rule unfulfilled, that she could possibly keep; if it was impossible for her to join the religious exercises of the community, she would follow them by herself, and when there was nothing else to be done, she would take refuge in prayer and silence. She used

to say that a sick religious might be dispensed from most of her ordinary rules, but never from that of silence, which was probably as good for the body as the soul !

At one time, being unable to eat the fruit which formed the evening collation of her Sisters, she was supplied with bread merely soaked in hot water, instead. Even this she considered over-indulgence, and wrote to the Superior, "Perhaps, Father, they will tell you that I am ill, but it really is not true ; or that you ought to forbid me to fast, but I am perfectly able to do so, only I take one or two cups of *véronique* every morning." "Really people do take so much care of their health and their life, that they end by doing nothing for fear of injuring one or shortening the other." Her own best remedy for all suffering, mental or bodily, and the source of all her strength, was in daily Communion, a privilege granted to her from an early date in her religious life. In that she rested with perfect gladness and delight ; all anxieties, all hopes, all fears, were carried to the altar, and there wholly trusted to Him. Whose Gracious Presence deigns to be among us in the Blessed Sacrament. All perplexities as to the government or direction of those under her charge were thus met, and lightened. No privilege that could be granted to one who was advancing in holiness was

considered so great as a more frequent communion ; she loved to dwell upon its exceeding blessing—telling her daughters that therein was all their strength, their surest and nearest road to perfection, their most powerful shield against temptation ; His Presence, like nothing else, could purify and enlighten the conscience, expand the heart, drive away all sadness and scruples, and leave it filled with confidence and love only ! When any of the nuns were ill, their Mother's special care was to provide for their frequent communion. "When we are strengthened by receiving Him," she would say to them, "we shall at least be better able to bear suffering, if we do not cease to suffer." If the sick were troubled with that depression and incapacity for active mental exertion which so often accompanies bodily weakness, and so were unable to realise prayer and union with our dear Lord as they wished, she used to say it was no reason that they should be deprived of Holy Communion, for inasmuch as all prayer is but the union of the soul with God, and that union is attained by suffering, borne with submission for His Sake, suffering is in reality a most effectual prayer.

In this as in all other respects, no Superioress had ever been more tender and thoughtful for her sick children, than the Royal lady now governing S. Denis ; and, however unyielding and strict she might

be towards herself in illness, she was far otherwise to them. She always assisted herself at the doctor's visits, superintended the treatment, and voluntarily undertook the nurse's part, performing all the nameless little offices of a sick-room with the gentlest and most loving care, often spending the night beside her "*chères malades*," as she called them. Yet, with all this affectionate solicitude, the Mère Tère'se dreaded letting earthly affection usurp any place which is due only to Him for Whom a religious has given up everything, and she has been seen, when a dying nun over whom she was watching with a mother's love, strove to kiss her hand, hastily to withdraw it and offer the Crucifix instead, as the one true object of all gratitude. She herself would always tell any of her children of their state, when that was pronounced to be dangerous. "Although a Carmelite should always be ready to quit this life," she said, "I should myself very much wish to be told when the happy hour was at hand, and I cannot leave that undone for others, which I should want for myself." Everything gave way to the claims of a dying Sister, the Princesses were sent away, nothing could move the Mother from her post. Nor were those less seriously ill neglected, or those whose infirmities arose from old age or the delicacy of youth and a luxurious education. Soeur Julie, whose health had never been strong, began to

be much worse soon after Sœur Tère'se became Prioress, and before long she was a victim to the most painful and distressing wounds, which required no ordinary skill and tenderness in dressing. For two years the Prioress herself was the only person who ever performed this office for Sœur Julie, and during a great part of the time, no one else in the community knew what was going on. At last, however, it became impossible for one person alone to do what was necessary, and the charge had to be transferred to two of the strongest Sisters in the house, who were amazed when they realised what the Prioress had been able to do alone for so long a time.

Whatever went wrong in the house, the Prioress attributed to herself; another and more capable head would have hindered the mischief, she always thought; but it was characteristic of her nature, at once strong as well as humble, that whenever she thought that she had failed, there was no time lost in vain regrets or looking back, she would humble herself without being discouraged, and begin anew. "I resign myself to leaving undone some of the good that might be done," she wrote once to the Abbé Bertin; "with due care and prudence, I hope to avoid very great faults, and I take courage when I look at our Divine Master, even if He wills me to

share Calvary and the Cross. I would submit in all things, accepting as my watchword, *Fiat, Fiat.*"

A story is told of this period of the Princess's priorate, which is exceedingly characteristic. The manufacturer who supplied the serge of which the nuns habits were made, sent some stuff of so unusually rough and coarse a texture, that when made, the habits were so heavy that the Sister in charge was in despair, not knowing to whom she could allot them, as no one could wear them except at the cost of great discomfort. Directly that the Mother heard of the difficulty, she settled it by saying, "What a fuss about nothing; give me one of the habits, and let Sœur Raphael have the other;" knowing that that Sister would, like herself, willingly accept the inconvenience.

It seems to have been long before the outer world, or even the members of other religious communities could believe that the Princess would not fare better, or have any greater indulgence than the rest. Some nuns from another part of the country who had rested at S. Denis, wrote with astonishment to their friends that the food there was no better, even worse than their own; and the Mother had occasion to write to another Prioress of the Order, "I can assure you that we are neither more softly clothed, or more delicately fed here than in other convents of our

rule. Whatever we can save goes to help our poorer communities; and we sell all the best fruit in our garden for that purpose." She would fain have all her children simple even in their likes and dislikes, avoiding whatever savoured of secularity. Thus she used to check such of them as wished to hear celebrated preachers, saying, that such curiosity in a religious was unseemly, and that only such as set forth the Gospel with simplicity and apostolic fervour were profitable to hear. "God rewards great orators with the applause of men," she would sometimes say, "but He gives the gift of converting souls to those who preach the Gospel." She always tried to check all little manœuvring, or planning, or calculating among the Sisters, urging them to go on in a straightforward way, without indulging self-love and natural propensities.

"She bore the rigour of her ascetic life with so much love," says her Carmelite biographer, "that no one who saw the calm joy expressed in her face would ever have suspected how many privations, and how much interior suffering she bore. No doubt it was as the reward of this free self-sacrifice that God gave her so special a gift of making the yoke of rule so easy and acceptable to others. Her words, her mere look, was enough to touch a sorrowing heart, and her tender loving ways would reach the

most reserved, and lead them to inward freedom of spirit. Always fearing lest others should be hindered by any recollection of her former position in the world, she sought to win them by her kindliness, and in spite of her many duties and occupations, she never seemed to be disturbed by visits from the nuns; she was always at their disposal, and if they wanted her at meal time or in the night, it was all the same, she was ever ready, listening with interest, and answering out of the fulness of a heart which overflowed with the love of God. In all this incessant intercourse with the Sisters, she always appeared as calm and recollected as in prayer or in silence-time. Such of her children as sought her as the confidante of their troubles or interior trials, always met with the most loving sympathy, which, tender as it was, braced them, and filled them with an increasing love of Christ's Cross. Her wisdom and clear-sightedness in the guidance of souls enabled her to see quickly what each needed, what God required of each, and how they might best perform His Will. While capable herself of the highest virtue, she knew how to sympathise with the weakest, and how to stimulate them to advance towards perfection. When dealing with beginners or with timid souls, she knew how to win confidence by her exceeding gentleness, pointing out the efforts required of them, urging them

on with a Mother's zeal, and helping to move them to do right with secondary motives, such as their weakness could bear. 'I know you love me,' she once said to a young novice, 'and that you would be sorry to cause me great suffering in this world, and yet you would expose me to it in the next if I were to give way to your wishes.' And to another she said, 'After all, God always has His own good reasons for all He does; if you were what I want you to be, I should love you too much.' . . . She delighted in finding one really able to offer herself wholly to God, and in such a case, she did not fear adding to the burden which love made it so easy to bear. 'Such a thing is good,' she would say, 'and *à la rigueur*, you might be satisfied with it, but so-and-so is better still, and I think you will do that.' . . . She considered the selection of spiritual reading an important point, and had great skill in assigning to each person that which would suit them best. The generous love which made her give up everything for God, never made her hard or severe towards others. She was always kind and considerate; her conversation was very pleasant, and she used to make every one cheerful in recreation. . . . She wanted to see those who bore the yoke of Christ always glad at heart, whether at prayer, at work, serving their neighbour, even when employed in what might be austere and

laborious. 'S. Paul bids us rejoice always,' she would say, 'and I think that cheerfulness gilds the pill of austerity.' She used to give up everything—time, tastes, health—to the requirements of her spiritual children. . . . Sometimes it was suggested to her that she carried this almost too far, and that she ought to check certain nuns who were too exacting. 'Why so?' she would say, 'does not the whole of a Superioress's time belong to her community?' And when she was urged to spare herself, she asked, 'Why should I seek more indulgence than our dear Master, Who came into the world not to be served, but to serve, and to give Himself up for others?' There was nothing she would not do to lighten the troubles of any of her children, and would labour unceasingly to gain the blessing of peace to their souls. 'A peaceful soul is the only pleasure which a religious can safely enjoy without fear,' she used to say; 'we have left the world on purpose to gain that blessing, which exceeds all else, and which is so precious that if it were to be bought, and could only be attained by the last and least among us, by selling our holy vessels, I should not hesitate a moment to sell them.' One day when she was more than usually busy, she forgot that she had intended to try and comfort a Sister who was in trouble, until after she had gone to bed. The

Prioress could not sleep with the thought of this omission upon her, and getting up she went directly to the Sister, saying, 'I ought to have spoken to you yesterday, my dear Sister; I fully meant to do so, and I cannot forgive myself for having thus unintentionally added to your troubles, so I have come now to try and repair my neglect.' The Sister shed tears of affection and gratitude; but our Mother would not listen to her thanks, saying, 'I came as much to relieve myself as you. How could I go to sleep while I knew you were anxious?' She always felt very keenly having to convey any painful tidings, such as the death of a relation to any of the nuns, and would do everything in her power to soften their grief, without depriving them of the merit of their sacrifice. 'When we have more than usual to bear,' she would say, 'we must call to mind all that our Lord bore for us, and think upon the great and eternal weight of glory He sets before us, by the side of which our present affliction may well appear light. Without religion, all sorrow seems unbearable and endless; but with it every pang is lightened and will work some good for and in us.' If any of the nuns were to blame in their conduct towards herself, she would speedily conquer them by her affection and kindness. A Sister who had behaved ill to her one day, tried to avoid meeting her, but the Prioress

went straight up to her, saying, 'May not a Mother embrace her child?' One day she told the Superior that she had broken her rule of never asking any favour at Court. 'But,' she said, 'such and such a Sister asked it of me,' mentioning one who had treated her unkindly, 'and so I could not refuse.' Her anxiety to observe the vow of poverty fitly, never relaxed; and she used to say that everything connected with the convent ought to bear its stamp. When the buildings were being repaired, she was able to make her own calculations, and check the work-peoples' charges; among other things, a staircase was to be put up for the King's use, and at his expense, so that it might have seemed only right to have a good staircase without regard to expense. But when the architect gave our Mother a plan, in which the banister cost a thousand francs, she rejected it instantly, horrified at the notion of so expensive a thing in a Carmelite convent, and she ordered one that should only cost a hundred francs instead. In like manner, when the King offered to restore the floor of the choir, some of the nuns thought that it might be done as handsomely as possible. 'For my part,' our Prioress said, 'I should like it to be as simple as in any other house of our Order; and I should wish that in everything our convent might be quoted chiefly as moulded accordi-

ing to the mind of our holy Mother.' She would not allow any large supplies of provisions to be kept in the house, and required the greatest care to be taken against waste. 'The poor ought never to be wasteful,' she would say, and she would go into every kind of economic detail with the lay Sisters. One day a lay Sister gave some opinion which was quite true, but disagreeably expressed; the Mother answered, 'Really, *ma sœur*, your advice is so good that I should follow it even without your scolding me.'"

In a letter written about this period, the Mère Térèse says, "All I can do for your protégée, is to recommend her to Adelaïde; if I began to meddle with such things myself, there would be no end to it, and I should be entangled after a very undesirable fashion in secular matters. I have quite enough to do with what concerns the Order, and I cannot break my rule of not going beyond it." Again, "Pray, dear Mother, give my usual answer, that I cannot meddle in this, because I never meddle in what concerns benefices. When such requests are made to you, pray always give this answer, or I shall be obliged to refuse to do as you wish, which would grieve me; I should be so glad to do anything for you. People expect me to do all sorts of things because I am a religious, but that is not what I

meant in coming here, and you know how inconsistent such a line of proceeding would be with our rule. I am perpetually asked all sorts of favours, or alms, and I answer that I possess nothing save such food and raiment as the community bestows upon me; I meddle with no business beyond saying my offices, sweeping, and attending to the Sisters; and I have nothing to do with any affairs save those of the Order. When I am asked for money I can only give the convent alms—two sous, twelve sous, or twenty-four sous; more than three francs we never give.” The Princess carried out this principle so fully, that she never would use her own pension, which she left entirely to the Superior’s disposal. In accordance with her known wish it went chiefly to the assistance of the poorer houses of the Order, and all economies which could be practised at S. Denis, as well as the produce of their garden, and of various little fancy works made by the nuns in recreation time, all went to the same object. “We need not be afraid of impoverishing ourselves for the sake of our poor houses,” she used to say; “overabundance is a great evil to a community, there is nothing like labour and poverty. Perhaps when I am gone my family may bear you in mind, but I strongly advise those who succeed me never to seek Court patronage. I left that sort of thing for my

soul's sake, and those who seek it out from worldly motives will run great risk of losing theirs." In spite of this, however, the Princess never failed to do anything in her power to benefit the Order, and she was consequently involved in a very considerable correspondence with and for its members.

CHAPTER VII.

NOT long before the expiration of the Mère Térèse's first priorate, an episode of conventual life occurred at Saint Denis which keenly excited her warm feelings. Some thirty years earlier Jansenism had crept into the convent, and when at last a reformation was made, certain Sisters refused obedience to their Superiors, and finally broke their vows and left the convent, rather than submit themselves to lawful authority. One of these Sisters, now upwards of ninety years of age, who had long been ill at ease, and desired to return to her vocation, at last took courage to confess that she was really a Carmelite, and her confessor immediately sent to Saint Denis to consult the Prioress as to what should be done. After submitting the case to the Archbishop of Paris, and to the Abbé Bertin, and receiving their full consent, she signified her readi-

ness to receive the wanderer, and on the day appointed, a poor wretched paralysed old woman was brought in a fiacre to the convent gates, where the Mother and Sisters were prepared to receive her, not as she expected with reproaches and contempt, but with the most pitying kindness and tenderness. Poor old Sœur Marthe was a pitiable object, clothed in rags, dirty, and abject; but when the coachman who brought her to Saint Denis lifted her out of his carriage, into the arm-chair prepared for her conveyance within—as she could not walk—she was so warmly received, that he exclaimed, “The poor old thing must be grandmother to one of these ladies! How good they are!” The Prioress would do everything herself for the aged penitent, and writing to one of the Visitors, she says, “Our poor old Sister of ninety-one came back to us yesterday, and we have thankfully given her our habit again. She is paralysed in her limbs, but quite clear in her head and speech, and very penitent. She is very thankful to come back, and wept much for the past.” Sœur Marthe lived four years after her return to Saint Denis, and on her death-bed she used to tell the nuns that she prayed that they might have a great love for silence, as, if she had observed that better, she would never have fallen into error as she did.

The three years of Madame Louise’s priorate

came to an end, and she looked forward to a quieter position with satisfaction, but the community unanimously re-elected her. "Alas!" she wrote to an intimate friend, "our Sisters have to-day perpetrated their folly over again, and it will be three years more before I shall be set free from an undertaking for which I am so ill fitted." It was during the following year that the Emperor of Austria, Joseph II., Marie Antoinette's brother, came to visit the Royal Carmelite of whom he had heard so much. The result of his inspection of the house and of the practices there observed, was his involuntary exclamation, "Really, Madame, I would rather be hung, than live such a life as you live here!" The Prioress discussed her manner of life with the Emperor, assuring him that having tried both the Court and Carmel, she thought she had a right to give her opinion as to their respective happiness—an opinion greatly in favour of the Carmel, of course.

About this time the good Mère Anne de S. Alexis was taken to her rest. Madame Louise had a very special affection for this nun, who had watched over her beginnings in the religious life, and whose experience and personal holiness, (she had been Superiororess during twelve years at different times,) made her advice very useful to her Royal pupil. The

venerable Mother was seized with apoplexy while saying the office in choir, at the moment that the words, "Dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints," were being repeated. These were the only remarkable events of the Princess's second term of priorate, except that having completed the restoration of the house in all other respects, she built a new refectory, which was greatly needed—Madame Adelaïde laying the first stone. The rules of the Order forbid any Prioress to be re-elected after her six years have expired, until another priorate has intervened; but so anxious were the nuns of Saint Denis to retain Madame Louise as their Superioress, that they had a project for obtaining special permission from the Pope to elect her for an indefinite period. But when the Princess found out what was contemplated, she set herself so earnestly and steadily to oppose what seemed to her nothing less than a grievous irregularity and scandal, that her Sisters gave up their intention. She wrote to the Abbé Bertin, requesting him to come and superintend the elections; she added, "It will be one of the happiest days of my life, and will set me free myself to study what I have been preaching to others for the last six years." The Princess also herself suggested to him that Sœur Julie would be the best Prioress—her health being now somewhat improved, though still scarcely equal to the inevitable

labour required from the Superioress of a community of above sixty religious.

Accordingly, on S. Andrew's day, 1779, Sœur Julie was elected Prioress, and at the same time the Révérende Mère Térèse de Saint Augustin was elected *première dépositaire*, (a sort of conventual chancellorship,) and, also, she was re-appointed Mistress of the Novices. Her satisfaction in quitting the first place among her Sisters was great; and the Sisters were not less edified by her conduct on returning to a subordinate position than they had been by her administration as Superioress. Her obedience and submission to the new Prioress were unbounded; she would do nothing without asking permission, and sought her counsel and direction in every detail of her work as *dépositaire*, or with respect to the novices. One day the Abbé Proyart came to present her with his Life of the King of Poland, the Princess's grandfather; but to his surprise, she would not accept it until she had been to the Prioress to ask permission to do so. Writing to one of the Visitors, the Abbé expressed his astonishment, and the answer said, "You can hardly imagine how fully the Princess acts up to the spirit of the religious life, or what progress she has made in the path of perfection. No doubt she might easily have provided herself with all such general permissions; indeed they have been offered to her, but

she is too much alive to the advantage of actual and immediate obedience to accept them, and she prefers reiterating acts of submission, which remind her of her dependence, at every hour of the day."

The Mère Julie had not forgotten her promises, and now she occasionally tried her former pupil's humility by what might have seemed harsh measures to those less entirely in earnest than they both were. Thus, for instance, almost directly after the Mère Térèse had resigned her office, she was severely rebuked by the new Prioress one day at recreation, before all the community, for some very trifling matter. Meekly kneeling, she listened to the somewhat lengthy rebuke with no expression save that of gratitude; and afterwards she thanked the Prioress privately for her zeal, intreating that it might not be relaxed on her behalf. On another occasion, the Princess had written a letter concerning the affairs of her own office as *dépositaire*, at the Prioress's dictation; when, understanding the matter herself better than her Superioress, she ventured to make some contrary suggestion; this was not accepted, and without another word, the letter was closed and sent.

The office of *dépositaire*, involving as it did the chief charge of the temporal affairs of the house, was very uncongenial to Madame Louise's tastes and habits. It was her duty to attend to the material

wants of the community, and all business matters with trades-people, workmen, &c., fell to her to transact. Between this, and her charge as Mistress of the Novices, she had plenty to do. In a letter to a Sister at the Rue de Grenelle, she says, "I dare say you think that I have made much of my *licences* !" (the time when conversation is permitted between the nuns out of recreation,) "but you are mistaken ; all that time has had to go to my letters, my novices, and my accounts. But one is always happy doing one's duty ; only I wish that either the day had more than twenty-four hours, or that I were allowed to sleep an hour less." And in another letter she says, "I am thankful to have nothing but writing and accounts to do ; it is not the sort of thing I used to like, but as time goes on, one's tastes change, and obedience makes everything easy." Madame Louise was always afraid of dealing too much after her old habits as a Princess with the trades-people employed by the house, or that they should think of her as the King's daughter rather than as a simple nun, and thus holy poverty might suffer. "One reason I apply to you," she wrote to a person whose help she sought, "is that I try to appear as little as possible when a purchase has to be made, to avoid the mistake so many people make, who will think of me as Madame Louise, who can afford to pay a long bill, instead of

as Sœur Tèreſe de S. Auguſtin, purveyor to the poor Carmelites." Writing to a tradesman, ſhe ſays, "Pray remember that S. Teresa's poor daughters want to have their purſe ſpared; I am ſure you know that we care leſs about what is ſhowy than for things that will laſt; we always admire moſt whatever will laſt longeſt."

At this time the long-wiſhed-for reſtoration of the convent church was ſet on foot. Louis XV. had promiſed to undertake the expenſe, but his death put an end to the plan, and now Louis XVI. granted his aunt's requeſt, by promiſing not merely to reſtore, but to rebuild the church. Of courſe this involved Madame Louiſe in ſtill further labour. M. Migne, the King's architect, was ſent to Saint Denis to conſult with her, and in June 1780, the new church was begun. The Mère Tèreſe ſtood out ſteadily againſt allowing the works to go on upon Sundays and holy days. Then, as now, it was only too general in Paris to deſecrate ſuch ſeaſons with ordinary labour, and it was by no means eaſy to effect a reſiſtance. "When the convent church at Verſailles was built," Madame Louiſe wrote to the Abbé Bertin, "neither the nuns or my ſiſters could prevent the work going on on Sundays, but I give notice I will not have it ſo here, and now is the time to ſpeak. It would be much better for the church to be a year longer in

building, if by that means the law of God and the Church be not broken; indeed I would far rather never have our new church, and run the risk of being crushed by the old one tumbling to pieces, than have so great a profanation carried on within our walls. It is no good for the builders to say it is their business; it is our business to put a stop to such things, and either to employ work-people who will obey the Church's law, or go without. In order that there may be no mistake, make M. Migne promise that it shall be so." And in another letter she says, "It is a good work to build a church, but a very bad and unchristian work to build it needlessly on holy days, and one in which, please God, I will have no hand. I have already given notice, that anybody who works on those days, must do it for love only, as I shall keep the strings of my purse tight, and am not going to pay for any such profanation. The poor workmen would never think of such a thing but for those who employ them." The Mère Térèse accomplished at Saint Denis what Mesdames de France had failed in at Versailles, and there was no work done about the new church on holy days.

The Princess voluntarily undertook a work as dépositaire, which her predecessors had wished to see accomplished, without being able to make even a beginning; the archives and papers of the convent

were in great disorder—an evil which increased daily, and caused frequent confusion and difficulty. The Princess undertook to have this rectified, and being allowed by the Superiors to employ capable persons, the evil was soon remedied. Nor were her labours for the benefit of the Order confined to her own community, or to those houses in which she had personal friends. A former Prioress of Saint Denis had made some preparations for founding a Carmelite house at Alençon, and now the attempt was renewed, under Madame Louise's auspices. She induced one of her royal nephews to accept the office of Founder, but nevertheless there were endless difficulties about the requisite "*lettres patentes*" and other formalities depending upon the local Parliaments of Rouen and Alençon. In one of her numerous letters to the Mère Victoire, the intended Prioress of the community, Madame Louise says, "One thing I know, I should be in despair if I were not certain that both you and I are sure to find in all this a good store laid up for us in our true home—the heavenly Jerusalem, where we shall be able to live without any registering or letters patent." At last, however, her perseverance triumphed, and the Carmelites were established at Alençon.

During the year 1781, great alarm was excited in the convents of Europe by the measures taken by

the Emperor of Austria for the suppression of religious houses. His visit to Madame Louise, and his expressions of dismay at her ascetic life, lead one safely to infer that he did not at all appreciate such a vocation, and he probably thought that he was conferring a boon upon all those whom he forced to return to the world. The Princess on all sides was besieged with petitions to interfere on their behalf; the Carmelites of Prague were first to apply, and those of Vienna, Gratz, Bohemia, and the Low Countries, soon joined the cry. But Madame Louise felt powerless to influence the Emperor, or to give any direct assistance which might avert the blow. "Our attachment to our holy Order," she wrote to the Prioress at Brussels, "and to you individually, makes us share your griefs most deeply. May God grant you all the grace you need under such trials. Our greatest trouble is that we can give you no help save by our prayers." Meanwhile, other sorrows came to her close at home. Madame Sophie de France was taken ill, and her life was despaired of. "I have no hope for Sophie," the Mère Térèse wrote to the Bishop of Clermont, "and it is hard to bear, but since God wills it, I must will it too. My sisters are very brave; Adelaïde told her everything, and now she keeps up her submission to God's Will." And a little later, "Sophie's death is a keen sorrow to me, but my heart

is filled with consolation when I think how freely she offered up her life. It is so true that as is a person's life, so will their death be, (*telle vie, telle mort!*) It is not easy to say much of her life, as her chief characteristic was her exceeding simplicity, and the care with which she concealed her goodness. All I can say is, that I wish I had as little to regret in my life as she in hers. I never knew a purer soul." About the same time the Mère Térèse de l'Enfant Jésus, who had been Mistress of the Novices to the Princess, and had continued her dear friend, entered upon her heavenly rest. Day by day the Princess seemed to put aside all earthly ties more, and when at the end of November 1782, the Mère Julie's Priorate was about to expire, and the community wished to re-elect her, she pleaded not reluctance only, but her feeble health as a reason against the appointment. "I own to you," she wrote to the Abbé Bertin, "owing to you as I do a perfect confidence as my Superior, that it is requisite for my health that I should not be again at the head of the house. I have only begun to recover this last year from the wear of my six years' Priorate—years of hard work to me. I consider that it was a miracle of God's Providence that I was able to stand it, but one could not expect such a miracle to be renewed, if mere human respect influenced the election. For my part, my conscience is

perfectly easy in asking you to require our chapter not to elect me, because my health really needs a mental rest which it is not possible for me to have as Prioress ; and spiritually, too, I need it for the acquisition of the many virtues in which I am deficient. My present work is not more than I can manage. The *dépôt* does not tire me, because writing comes easily to me, and I am used to the accounts. My other employment as Mistress of the Novices, which will probably be continued, is not of less importance, and the labour is not small, but it is nothing to that of the Prioress. I do not think I am moved either by false humility or by indolence in saying this. I know that either way I am under obedience, and if I press that the Priorate should continue in the hands of our present Mother, it is because no one would think of anything else if I had not been *Madame Louise*, and because the community is in excellent hands, and knows it. . . . My firm resolution, Father, is to become a good religious ; will you not help forward God's Grace by enabling me to live these three years under obedience ? You will promote my happiness in this world and the next by so doing, for I have made a firm resolution, especially during the last two months, to use God's Grace to the utmost, and I think I may venture to say that since then I have begun really to be a Carmelite. Such, Father, are my real

feelings, as to my spiritual and temporal wants. In God's Name I intreat you to help forward my weakness and my desire to do what I can !”

The nuns, who all believed that the only real hindrance to their wish lay in the Princess's own humility, pressed their point with the Superior, assuring him that her election would be acceptable to the King and to Mesdames de France ; upon which the Abbé Bertin told her that their opinion ought to be consulted in such a matter. But the Mère Térèse was not so easily baffled ! She took fright at the thought of so secular an influence acting upon her community, and wrote at once to Louis XVI., who complied with his aunt's wish, and wrote to say that if she and the Superior agreed about the matter, the community ought to yield. The Princess sent her nephew's letter to the Abbé Bertin, saying, “ You can read it to the chapter ; my sisters are of the same opinion, and think it very strange that any of our nuns should fancy they wish me to be Prioress.” Accordingly the Mère Julie was re-elected Prioress, and the Mère Térèse retained her office. “ Congratulate me,” she wrote to a nun at Alost, “ our elections are over, and we all stay where we were, to the great regret of our Mother : in this solitary case I must say that my prayers have been more effectual than hers !”

The re-election of the Mère Julie was no hindrance to the good work carried on at Saint Denis on behalf of the Carmelites who were being dispersed and cast adrift in the Low Countries. The two Mothers had but one mind on this subject, and they laboured indefatigably on behalf of their persecuted Sisters, to all of whom they were anxious to offer a refuge in France. The suppression was a cruel one; in many places all the nuns' worldly possessions were seized; furniture, papers, sacred vessels—nothing was spared. At Brussels they were ordered to produce their plate and kitchen furniture, when, to the amazement of the commissioners, the good religious fetched their wooden spoons, their earthen dishes and common pots and pans, which were all they possessed. A member of the council, M. de Villegas d'Esteimbourg, interested himself warmly for the nuns, and was able to be of great use to them; but neither he or any one else could avert the troubles which were coming, and the only thing to be done was as far as possible to offer an asylum to all whose houses were thus rudely broken up. Madame Louise wrote to the Prioress of the Brussels community, telling her of the various convents in France which were ready to receive their Flemish Sisters, and expressing her earnest wish that Saint Denis could have welcomed them all. "When you come, however," she says, "you will see that our

cells are more than full, but whether we go to bed or not, we shall receive you as you pass, and we shall claim to keep as many as we can. The bell is ringing for matins, so I must not indulge myself in telling you how sincerely we enter into the trials you are undergoing, but I shall tell it all to *le bon Dieu* while I am saying office; that is not a distraction, otherwise I should have to confess to as many distractions as prayers!" And in another letter to the same Prioress, she says, "Oh, dear Mother, I can think of little save you! How torn your hearts must be, and what a pleasure it is to us to afford you any consolation in our power, for in leaving Flanders, you leave everything—country, convent, relations, friends, directors, all! I trust that your spiritual needs will be supplied here; our house is fervent, very united, and rather strict as to hardness of living, but most tender to those who are sick; I like to think that you will be at rest in this asylum; we already love you dearly." These charitable intentions were promoted by the King's hearty consent, and his practical assistance in paying for an alteration by which a large barn was turned into twelve additional cells for the reception of the wished-for guests. Great efforts were made to hinder the Flemish nuns from joining other communities; in some cases, their own relations sought to persuade them that they were justified under such

circumstances as the present in returning to the world; some felt their own courage fail under the pressure, and the general tone went against the strict observance of the religious rule to which they were bound. All manner of strange reports about Saint Denis and Madame Louise were circulated in order to deter the nuns from going there. Among these stories the Princess was greatly amused with one which affirmed that Louis XV. had given the title of Marquise to all the nuns, and that Madame Louise had taken her own cook from Versailles with her. "It was well worth while," she said, "to have a cook from Court to dress carrots and peas!" Writing to these nuns, the Princess gives a description of herself and the Mère Julie, "I do not know whether you have had any portrait given of our Mother? but while I heard my third Mass I thought of sending it to you—was it a distraction or an inspiration? I leave that to you to decide. Well, our Mother is rather tall, she has an oval face, light blue eyes, a clever nose, and pretty teeth—she has both an Irish and a Flemish look about her. She seems cold, but directly that she speaks she wins your heart by her open, simple, intelligent manner. Your humble servant is little, has a big head, large forehead, dark eyebrows, blue grey brown eyes, a long hooked nose, a peaked chin—she is as round as a ball, and hump-backed. They say, though, that her hump

does not show much under the elegant habit of the Carmelites ; she does not care, however, and has never cared about it since she became a reasonable being. *Au reste*, I shall be satisfied if you do not dislike her appearance, and if you look at nothing but her heart, which is devoted to you." Some letters to Brussels are of a graver tone. "Can it be possible," the Princess writes, "that the Emperor, (who seems destined to try you by the fire of persecution,) has really established a bureau of magistrates with two Bishops who are to regulate the religious communities of Flanders, and are going to change all your customs? For God's Sake, Reverend Mother, do not submit to it, you cannot be forced to do so against your will. Come rather to France, where you can keep your vows, and do not be frightened by threats. What harm can they do you? We are all praying for you, looking upon you as the faithful who were persecuted in the Church's primitive days. I intreat you to write and tell us all that happens—we feel the most lively interest in all that concerns you. You have only to say, 'I cannot consent to these changes, and I shall go to France, where an asylum is promised to us, because I mean to live and die a Carmelite, as I have vowed before God to do.' And whatever is proposed to you, be content to reply, 'I cannot, I ask nothing of the Emperor, I am going ;' and so you will greatly

embolden other communities. Above all, Reverend Mother, do not be disheartened. If I might presume to preach to you, I would bid you remember the courage with which our Mother Saint Teresa established her reform, and of all that she endured, being all but sent to prison, and that under a religious King. Hers is a noble example to us. If my dear Imperial cousin were to read this, perhaps he would feel inclined to wring my neck, but my nephew of France would protect me, for he is willing to give you an asylum in his kingdom. Make haste to let us hear of you, Reverend Mother, I beg, and do not be shocked at my zeal."

At last the suppression of the Carmelite houses was completed, and the Princess wrote to M. de Villegas, "I pray ceaselessly for him by means of whom God visits us so heavily, that he may be forgiven. I hope then he will see that we contemplatives are not so useless as he has been induced to believe. I often say S. Stephen's prayer for him and those around him, 'Forgive them, Lord, for they know not what they do.'" Louis XVI. gave a formal act of consent, admitting those nuns who wished to take refuge in France, to his kingdom; and Madame Louise worked with renewed energy both to make arrangements for those who were willing to come, and to induce such as hesitated to decide on being

faithful to their vows. Her own mind was so clear about it, that she could not understand any faltering on the part of others. "I would rather be a Carmelite at Constantinople," she exclaims, "than return to Versailles;" and writing to the Superioress of the Visitation in Paris, she says, "I only regret having but one self to offer to the Lord; it seems to me that if I had two, I should give the second with a more hearty will, because I should understand the matter better. Forgive this seeming extravagance, madame; but as you yourself know the happiness of the religious life, you will not be surprised at the transports with which it fills one, especially under circumstances which lead one to appreciate its full value."

The liberal hospitality thus offered was not without cost; Joseph II. gave no pensions to the dispersed nuns, and in some cases it was difficult even to provide for the expense of their journeys, for which a very small and insufficient sum was allowed. The convent at S. Denis was well endowed, but the community gave so largely to other poorer houses of the Order, that it was impossible to receive so many extra inmates except at the cost of privations to those already belonging to the household. The first to arrive as permanent guests were two nuns from Alost; but at the same time many others, between sixty and seventy Carmelites, received a temporary shelter on

their way to other religious houses. Many touching anecdotes were carried on by these guests, so kindly and lovingly received by the Princess Carmelite. One Flemish Sister loved to tell how on her arrival, timid and scared, she was so attracted by the winning kindness of a French nun, that she felt quite at ease with her, and ventured to ask which was Madame Louise of France? finding to her amazement, that her confidante was that royal lady. About two hundred nuns of various Orders took refuge in France, and almost all were anxious to see her who they considered as, under God, their benefactress. The Brussels Carmel was the last to be broken up; all the Sisters united in rejecting all projects of secularisation, and prepared to accept exile rather than break their vows. A touching letter addressed to them on this occasion by the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines is preserved :—

“MY DEAR DAUGHTERS IN CHRIST,—However trying this blow may be, do not lose courage in the hour of trial to which it has pleased God’s Providence to subject you. Full of sorrows myself, I am quite able to enter into yours, and to feel what it must cost you to leave the position which has hitherto been your greatest happiness, and in which God has poured out His graces and blessings so abundantly upon you.

But it is in Him Alone and in the fulfilment of His Holy Will that you must seek, as assuredly you will find, consolation in your trouble. Remember that it is not in the power of man to separate you from the Heavenly Bridegroom to Whom you pledged yourself at the holy altar, He will ever dwell within your heart, and wherever you may be, He will be the unfailing witness to your genuine regret that you can no longer wholly fulfil the solemn engagements by which you bound yourselves to Him in the face of the Church. He knows all the price and all the greatness of your sacrifice, which is so much the more precious in His Sight as it costs you more tears and sighs. He will accept such observance of your rule as circumstances permit of, and He will know how to make up to you by His own special Grace, for the advantages of community life, obedience, and others of which you may be deprived. Throw yourselves then wholly upon Him, place yourselves unreservedly in His Hands; above all, remember that everything in this world is passing away, time is short, your reward is at hand, and a heavenly country awaits you, where there will be none of these vicissitudes, but everything will be lasting, unchangeable, eternal. Never lose sight of the blessed end of all our hopes, and rest assured that the most certain way of attaining to it is through sorrow, tears, trouble and suffer-

ing, since Jesus Christ, our Blessed Leader and Example, chose it for Himself before He entered into glory. I can say no more, my dear Daughters in God, save to promise you my poor prayers, my counsel, and any such help as it may be in me to afford you."

At last, after many difficulties and hindrances, the good Carmelites of Brussels left the convent where they had hoped to live and die. The Father Provincial of the Order celebrated the Holy Eucharist for them between one and two in the morning, communicating all his spiritual daughters for the last time. After some final prayers and litanies, they took their farewell of the graves of those happier Sisters whose exile was over, and who had gained "the Country," and kissing the ground they loved so well, the sorrowful little band departed.

The Princess had sent the Abbé Consolin, who had for some years been confessor to the community at Saint Denis, to Brussels to help her distressed Sisters, some time previously, and he had returned to assist in their removal, and now, with the Father Provincial and M. de Villegas, closed the procession. The latter had prepared carriages, which were waiting at the convent door, as well as a crowd of people of every rank, lamenting over the departure of the

good nuns. M. de Villegas was forbidden by the government to go with them to France, and after the first night's rest at a Benedictine Abbey, where they were hospitably received, the good layman parted from his charge, and the Sisters continued their journey under the care of the Abbé Consolin and the Father Provincial. The Abbé had left carriages, sent by Madame Louise for their use, at Valenciennes, where their last link with their own country had to be severed. The Father Provincial confessed them all, and having given them his blessing, he returned to Brussels, while the exiles proceeded to Saint Denis, where they arrived on June 16, 1783, and met with a most cordial welcome from the Prioress and the Mère Térèse. This was followed by a no less kindly reception from the Archbishop of Paris and the Visitors, while the Royal family joined in doing them honour, and the King granted the Flemish nuns free letters of naturalisation, as he did to all others who, like themselves, sought refuge in France. With her wonted courtesy and consideration, Madame Louise invited M. de Villegas a little later to come to Saint Denis and see how happy his exiles were in their new home, which he accordingly did. The Brussels Sisters joined the Saint Denis community entirely, and remained with them until even worse troubles than those they had experienced at home came upon

their French Sisters. The final crash of religion and government was fast approaching, and in 1792, the community of Saint Denis being ejected and dispersed, the Flemish nuns returned to Brussels, where a better prospect had opened for them since the death of Joseph II., and the succession of his brother Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany.

The Princess was very happy in the success of her object, and rejoiced not a little amidst her community, now numbering sixty professed nuns; but the time of quiet and solitude she had always been looking to, did not seem likely to come, her visitors grew more and more numerous, all classes of people, from Kings and Bishops, down to lowly exiled religious, were anxious to see and talk with "the heroine of the French Carmel," as she was called, and though she disliked visits extremely, the Mère Térèse never rejected any which might be useful either to the individuals themselves, or to God's Glory and the good of others. Thus, she received the King of Sweden, and took him over the house, charming him with her courtesy and cheerfulness. At the foot of the staircase, the King paused, somewhat puzzled as to his rules of etiquette when the Princess he was dealing with chanced to be a Carmelite nun, and said hesitatingly, "If I might venture, I should offer Madame my arm?" "And I should gladly accept

it," she replied, "both because the Carmelite rule makes no provision for the case of kings offering one their arm, and also because our families have been in a position to offer such courtesy to one another for so long." When the King saw Madame Louise's cell and its more than simple furniture, he could not help exclaiming, "Is it possible that this is the dwelling of a daughter of France!" "Indeed it is," she answered, "and I can assure you that one sleeps better here than at Versailles, and one grows fat; you see I am fat now, which I never was there." The King heard the precise division of the day at Saint Denis, visited the refectory, and was told what the food served was, he examined the earthenware vessels and wooden spoons, in short, he saw all the privations of the Order, and was more and more amazed at the Princess's evident and entire happiness. As he was leaving, he could not help exclaiming, that of all the wonderful sights he had seen in France and Italy, nothing was so extraordinary as that contained within the walls of Saint Denis. It was a very genuine happiness; she used sometimes to say that she was *too* happy, but it was because "a day in the courts of the Lord's house was more precious" to her than all this world's treasures. How little the Mère Tère'se thought herself to have attained to any high degree of saintliness may be judged from the resolutions,

written by herself at the close of her annual retreat in 1784. "To do everything in a spirit of penitence and with a view to repairing the time lost during the fourteen years I have been here. To strive after remembering God's Presence habitually, even during recreation, and to take measures for maintaining such recollection. To turn all contradictions, spiritual or temporal troubles, and all actions which are disagreeable to me, into acts of penitence, which I call momentary penitence.

"Exactitude in mortification in all circumstances. To maintain an inviolable attachment to our holy rules, and to die sooner than deliberately to break the least of them. If I follow them exactly, I am sure to win Heaven.

"Consequently, exact silence, even with the novices, in the appointed hours, unless duty forces me to break it."

"These resolutions," says the Carmelite biographer of the Mère Tère'se, "she kept with all the fervour of a novice, and the perfection of one long confirmed in grace. Nothing could disturb her habitual self-watchfulness for an instant, or her care to turn every action to the Glory of God and the good of souls."

During the year 1785, the new church of the convent was consecrated, greatly to her delight, and the silver candlesticks given to the Princess by Pope

Clement XIV. were duly placed upon the altar, which, as well as the whole of the sanctuary, was as beautiful and splendid as all that concerned herself was lowly and insignificant. Writing just after the consecration to the Superior, she says, "What proves to me more than ever that God will have me to be wholly His, is that the more faithful I am to Him, the stronger and better able I am for His service. Oh, Father, there is nothing like making a good resolution—I shall never cease to regret that I was thirteen or fourteen years about it—it is so true, as I know by experience, that one does great things easily, while one makes a fuss about a trifle. But, after all, God has His own meaning to work out all the time, and here there is wherewithal to humble me for the rest of my life. Pray for your poor eldest daughter, Father, who deserves the lowest place both here and hereafter—indeed she will count herself happy if she may but win the least little place in Paradise—even behind the door! May it be so, but she has a great deal to do before she can hope even for that. You don't believe me: I wish God thought about it as you do, but He sees through and through one's heart, and nothing is hid from Him."

During the last years of her Priorate, the Mère Julie's health had become increasingly bad; her sufferings were extreme, and the probability that her

life could not be prolonged grew daily more evident. "Pray to God that He would spare our Mother," the Princess wrote to a Sister at the Rue de Grenelle, "for there is not such another. Her holiness is wonderful; the simplicity of her manner delights every one; nothing can alter the evenness of her temper under any circumstances, whether it be bodily sufferings, contradiction, sacrifices of every kind, in the midst of importunities without end from all the Sisters, who love her so much that they do not leave her in peace an instant. . . . It is a foretaste of Paradise to live under obedience to her, and what makes me most uneasy is, that when one has reached such a point as she has, one's reward cannot be very far off." It was said at Saint Denis, that no one ever heard a murmur from the Mère Julie's lips, though latterly her whole body became as one great wound, and it was impossible to do the least thing for her without putting her to terrible pain. "Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me!" said calmly and patiently, was all that the severest agony could wring from her. The tender affection that existed between her and the Mère Térèse made both shrink from the thought of the coming separation. "I fear," the Mère Julie said, "that I have clung overmuch to life in the hope of being useful to you, but it is foolish and presumptuous; God will remain when I die, and He will do

more for you than I can." And at another time she told her dear friend, "I had only one sacrifice left to make, that of our separation, and it cost me half an hour's effort, but, thank God, now it is wholly made."

A day or two before her death, the Queen and her two children, and Madame Elisabeth were at Saint Denis, and visited the dying Prioress; they left her, exclaiming, "How can any one suffer so much, and yet be so perfectly calm?" This blessed peace was granted her to the last, and her mind remained perfectly clear to the very end, her constant ejaculation being, "My God, my all, my eternal portion!" With these bright words of hope, she laid down the weary burden of the flesh, and entered upon her heavenly rest, on September 25th, 1785.

"Our duty is to say, '*Fiat Voluntas Tua*' in its fullest sense," the Mère Térèse had written just before to the Abbé Bertin; "we are pledged to the cross in life and in death; but this dear Mother was my great support, I was always learning from her. When she is gone, I must do as I can, and God will be merciful as to all I have undone, I trust. I ought to live in penitence for my sins, and my penitence at Saint Denis was too easy, as long as I had her." When the parting had actually taken place, she wrote to a religious at the Rue de Grenelle, "To try and

describe my grief, dear Mother, would be in vain. I can see her in heaven, but I see her no more on earth, and there is not a thought but is linked with her, not a moment but I miss her sorely. Three years of suffering without an instant of impatience; more than three months of fearful pain without any utterance of complaint save, 'My God, my all, my eternal portion !' A Mother who has been my guide for fifteen years, our companionship continual, our confidence perfect. How could one be comforted if God were not over all? But I hope this cross will set forward my salvation, and I would fain lose nothing of it. You will see by the confused way in which I am writing, how impossible it is to write to any but those who have known her as you and I have done. I am quite well; I eat because God would have me live to suffer more yet." "She wept for the Mère Julie," a Carmelite says, "as for a sister and a dear friend, as the Saints wept for those to whom they were united through God, as S. Bernard wept for his beloved brother, with tears which flow without in any way lessening a most entire resignation, leaving the soul humble and submissive beneath the Hand of God." Thus, in spite of her grief, the Mère Térèse performed all the duties which devolved upon her as *dépositaire* in connection with the burial, and from that moment, although her kindness and affection for

all the Sisters were unchanged, those who knew her best fancied that they could discover that she strove not to set her closest affections even on such pure and holy relationships, but rather to concentrate all her real love and clings on Him Who Alone could never leave her, even for the few passing hours of this life.

There was no question in the community as to who should succeed the departed Prioress, and the Mère Térèse resumed the labours of that office, apparently without raising any objection this time. Her children were struck with the exceeding sanctity and devotion of her life, which had always seemed remarkable even among religious, but now there was something indefinable about it, which made them whisper among themselves that her course must be nearly run, and that they must prepare to give her up too to God. The Mère Julie was a daily loss to her, and as she said, there was no hour in which she did not miss her. The old compact by which the late Prioress had undertaken to watch over and direct her friend had been faithfully kept to the last, and now the Mère Térèse considered who would be best able to supply her place in that respect. Rather to the surprise of the community, she selected Sœur Seraphine, who was but recently professed, and had been one of her novices; a Sister who was earnest, exact,

open, and fearless, but somewhat deficient in tact and temper. However, the Mère Tère'se submitted meekly to the sometimes indiscreet zeal of her young directress, as usual believing that she herself was infinitely inferior to her as to the rest of her Sisters. There must have been many occasions when she could not but compare Sœur Seraphine regretfully with her dear Mère Julie—as when, for instance, one evening, missing the Prioress at Compline, the young Sister hurried to her cell, and found her writing a letter, upon which the summons to Compline was given. “The Duke of Parma’s courier is waiting,” answered the Prioress, “and it has been impossible for me to write this letter all day.” “Never mind, Mother, it is Compline time.” “Ma sœur, you really disturb me very much.” “Come to Compline, Mother, come to Compline!” was the only answer. The Prioress did not like to keep the courier waiting, but on the other hand, her self-mistrust and her spirit of obedience bade her leave her letter, and accordingly, she laid down the pen, and followed Sœur Séraphine into choir. The next day, when the good Sister had recovered from her headache and regained her temper, she was conscious how unseemly her conduct had been, and she sought the Prioress with humble apologies. “I am so glad to hear you say so, my child!” the Mother answered, “for I must honestly

tell you that yesterday evening I was half afraid you were going out of your mind."

When the fault committed was to her own praise instead of her humiliation, she was not so indulgent. The chanoinesses of a certain abbey wanted to procure some of Madame Louise's hair with which to work sundry little embroideries, which were likely to be valued highly for her sake. The question was, how to get any, as it was well known that she would not allow her hair to be given if she knew what was wanted. However, the petition reached Saint Denis, and Sœur Raphael, whose office of *infirmière* occasionally led to her cutting the Prioress's hair, undertook to do her best, but she was detected, and after several attempts, the prohibition was issued that she was not to keep a single hair either for herself or for anybody else. What was to be done? A little plot was at last concocted to deceive their good Mother—while Sœur Raphael was at work, another Sister was to come in, and to accuse herself of some trifling fault, for which she was to kiss the ground, and meanwhile, —we must fear being all the time sadly deficient in a true spirit of repentance,—she was to clutch some hair which Sœur Raphael was to contrive to let fall at the right moment. The scheme answered admirably, the hair was obtained, and the embroidery accomplished. But, unfortunately for the plotters, by and by some of

the work was sent to Saint Denis. The Prioress saw it, and found out what was its history. She immediately accused Sœur Raphael, who confessed to her share of the misdemeanour, fully reckoning thereby to win perfect pardon; but not at all, the Prioress insisted on all her "relics," as she called them, being immediately thrown away, and Sœur Raphael was forced to obey. This was one of the many anecdotes which she loved to tell in her old age, of Madame Louise and the good days of Saint Denis.

This third period of Madame Louise's priorate was not marked by any special events, the members of her own family appeared to draw more and more to her, and sought not so much the mere enjoyment of her society as to advance their own spiritual health by frequently seeking her. Madame Elisabeth above all delighted in being at Saint Denis, and would fain have followed her aunt's example altogether. This was not permitted her, but doubtless, during the days spent among the Carmelites, the young Princess acquired some of that recollected and saintly spirit which both supported her through the terrible days which were near at hand, and enabled her to be, as she was, the good angel of her unhappy brother Louis XVI. and his Queen during the horrors of the Revolution and the closing scenes of their tragedy. At this earlier time, Madame Elisabeth's great

pleasure was to take her part in the domestic arrangements as though she were a postulant, and her aunt encouraged her to do so. The nuns loved to tell how one day Madame Elisabeth, coming early to the convent, begged to be allowed to wait upon them at their dinner, and having put on a large apron and kissed the ground, she took up her post at the door where a board was given her, on which the portions for each Sister were placed. Madame Elisabeth went on well enough at first, distributing to each nun her appointed portion, but soon she had the misfortune to tilt the board, and one portion was spilt. Poor Madame Elisabeth was overwhelmed with confusion and did not know what to do, when the Prioress helped her out of the difficulty by saying, "After such a piece of awkwardness, my dear niece, the culprit is expected to kiss the ground." The Princess did this immediately, and then went on more successfully with her duties.

A letter of Madame Louise, written about this time to the Prioress of the Carmelites at Chalon-sur-Saône, has been preserved, which shows her views about the office she held in all their humility and simplicity. "I feel ashamed, Reverend Mother, to think that you should have taken the trouble to write and consult me as to the duties of a Prioress; I imagine that you have not filled that office before, else it would

certainly rather be my part to consult you, for I think you are my senior in religion, and I am sure you know more of it practically than I do. I know only one thing, that one must try to carry out the rule with all one's heart one's-self, and to make others do the same, but this last with great charity, and great indulgence for those who are weak, without giving way one's-self to weakness. I confess that this is not easy, and when one has to hold a chapter, or to rebuke a Sister, especially if she be older than one's-self, one would rather bear the discipline through a whole psalter! But I am always comforted by S. Francis de Sales, who says that if one only fulfils one's duties as well as one is able, they are accepted by God. And if they are not well fulfilled in the eyes of men, our Superiors change us. So, dear Reverend Mother, let us do our best during our three years, for I think we were elected about the same time! If people get tired of us in three years, they will set us on the shelf, and we shall have no cause to reproach ourselves either for severity or weakness. Love of God, love of our neighbour, and a great stock of patience,—these seem to me what a poor Prioress wants to make her way on towards the heavenly country. I hope you and I shall meet there. Meanwhile, Reverend Mother, let us pray often for each other, and while we are

bound by our heavy charge to the foot of the Cross of our Divine Bridegroom, let us often cast ourselves into His Heart. That should ever be the aim of our holy Mother Teresa's children."

The last retreat which the Mère Térèse was to keep, left as usual its stamp in her simple earnest resolutions. These were:—

"1. To keep God ever before me as our great end, and to act under the influence of this truth.

"2. To hate the slightest sin more than all possible evils, not because of the punishment it deserves, or for the sake of any reward, but because it displeases God Who is worthy of all our love. But still to make use of fear and hope as motives for more earnest penitence, and more diligently serving God.

"3. To take every event of life in the spirit of penitence, from the greatest to the most trivial suffering or contradiction.

"4. Not to spare myself in God's service, in keeping the rule, in acts of charity, or of entire devotion to our Sisters.

"5. To resign myself absolutely to death, as the penance due to my sins.

"6. To die daily, and put aside self in preparing for death, which I hope will lead me to my eternal reward."

These resolutions were given to Sœur Séraphine,

her *zélatrice*, by the Prioress, saying, "This is what God requires of me, and what, with the help of His Grace, I am resolved to do. You will prove your friendship by judging me according to these rules, without any indulgence."

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM the time of the Mère Julie's death, it was very evident that Madame Louise looked more nearly and thoughtfully to her own. Her humility and keen sense of unfitness to appear in God's Eternal Presence had given her a certain fear of death, which she not unfrequently expressed, as for instance, when writing to urge a Sister to persevere, she says, "Indeed although I have a great desire and a great need to live, in order to repent and make ready more fully, yet I would gladly offer up my life for the saving of your soul." But now fear seemed to have departed, and the Sisters noticed that she often spoke about death as though it were an uppermost subject in her thoughts. She told Sœur Raphael that she often feared lest the Sisters should be unwilling to tell her when she was in danger, and so she might lose the blessing of the last Sacraments; and she proposed that they should make a compact that each would

tell the other if there was a prospect of approaching death in either case. Her health was weak, far more so than she was willing to allow. That last winter she wrote to a Sister at the Rue de Grenelle, "I am almost frozen, and sometimes I think that my fingers will drop off with cold. I cannot get warm without pain, yet on the whole I have been well off, for I have not had many cracks in my hands this winter." Yet in the coldest weather the Prioress would be found when morning dawned, still praying before the altar where her Sisters had left her at night. One of the nuns remonstrated, saying that the Mère Térèse would ruin her health, but the answer was, "Do not talk of my health, I am ashamed of being so well! The nights at Versailles did tire me indeed, but those of Saint Denis are a rest to me. Besides, to tell you the truth, when I come into God's Presence, all my own wants come before me like a cloud, then those of other people press upon me; from the living, I turn to the dead, and it seems impossible to come to an end." She made her confession twice in the week, and her Communions had never ceased to be daily. The other nuns watched her closely; an indefinable feeling seemed to take possession of them that the bright example now before their eyes would soon be only a thing of memory, and every detail of her interior life which they could gather was precious to

them. "When I was alone with our Mother at night," Sœur Raphael says, "I used to try and learn her devotional practices for my own edification. I begged her to say her usual prayers for the night out aloud, and she kindly did so; but either because she was afraid of keeping me awake too long, or of waking me, she used to shorten her prayers; I mean she would leave off speaking aloud, but I used to see that she was still praying silently. She would take holy water on first coming into her cell, and again at the end of her prayers, and she used often to say that it had a great virtue against the powers of darkness, through the Church's blessing. . . . She used to keep the Crucifix which we all wear close to her heart all night. 'I talk to Him until I fall asleep,' she said. I asked whether He answered her? 'Oh yes,' she replied, 'the ear of my heart hears His answer.' She used to conclude with a preparation for death which was made as fervently as if she expected that night to be her last. Every moment that she was not asleep was spent in prayer; if she awoke before midnight, she used to wait till that hour and then get up, and prostrate herself in adoration of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. I once observed that this practice was not easy, and she replied that she had found it very difficult, especially during the very cold seasons. 'But what of that,' she added, 'if

one can show any love to Him Who gave all His Blood for our salvation?’”

The clouds which were fast closing over her country were by no means unnoticed by the daughter of Louis XV. and aunt of Louis XVI. Many an hour was spent in fervent prayer that God would put forth His Hand in mercy and stem the tide of ungodliness and infidelity which was pouring over the whole of France, and threatened soon to overwhelm all faith and religion. Happy those to whom it was given to pass from earth's wild scenes before the fearful crisis was reached, and the Revolution in all its horrors broke upon Europe!

Madame Louise was of these favoured ones, her earthly course was nearly ended, her heavenly rest well-nigh won. One day she was summoned to receive a friend, who brought very grievous tidings from without of political and religious troubles which seemed hopelessly dark, no bright ray of light to soften or lessen the gloom. The Princess had not forgotten her country or her family, albeit she had left the world for ever, and the anguish of mind which oppressed her now was so keen as to wring forth a prayer that God would not let her live to see the misfortunes that must surely come upon France and Louis XVI. As she was leaving the parloir, a sealed packet, professing to have come from Rome,

was given to her. It was inscribed as "Saintes Reliques," and on an inner envelope was written, "Reliques du Père Eternel." Startled at such words, the Prioress broke the seal, and found a quantity of hair covered with some powder, which she inhaled before she had time to give it to the portress who had delivered the packet, and who instantly burnt it. Whether the belief entertained by the nuns that this means had been deliberately chosen in order to poison the Princess was well founded, or whether the whole thing was no more than a foolish trick of some irreligious person intended to insult religion in her person, will probably never be known. Madame Louise said nothing about it at the time, and when later on she mentioned her suspicion that she had been poisoned, it was with a charge to her Sisters to keep the matter secret, which they did until they were driven from Saint Denis in 1793. But whether the packet thus received were the cause, or whether it arose from distress of mind at the public tidings she had heard, certain it is that that very day the Princess became ill. She told some of the nuns what she had heard, adding, "Let us pray to God for the faith with all our heart. His enemies are very bitter. This news has upset me strangely." Still she strove against her grief and her physical distress, and fulfilled all her usual duties; among others, seeing

several nuns who were making their annual retreat, to whom she spoke of the great dread and sorrow which had come upon her as regards their country. During that day, a very serious and painful swelling appeared in her stomach, but as she obtained temporary relief from some simple remedies, she went on in her usual way, never giving way to her pain, or omitting the ordinary duties and exercises of the community. One occupation, which had been rather a pleasure than a duty, she was forced to give up, that of daily dressing an aged lay Sister who was completely paralysed. The nuns did not take any particular alarm, though the Prioress often spoke as though she were soon about to leave them. Some new habits were being made, and she remarked to the Mère Angelique, that though the work was being hurried on, she should never wear one, they would be for others. With the Abbé Consolin, who had been her confessor since the death of the Abbé du Ternay, she spoke openly of her death as a thing close at hand, and of her preparation for it; all fear had passed away from her mind, and instead, she felt only a most perfect calm and peace, together with an exceeding desire and longing for the happy hour which should unite her for ever to Him Whom her soul loved. The Abbé was greatly struck with the way in which the Heavenly Bridegroom had removed all

thorns from the path of His servant and turned them into sweetness, granting her so exquisite a foretaste of the blessedness awaiting her in her true home. Meanwhile the attacks of pain in her stomach became daily more severe and exhausting, and the Prioress's suffering state could no longer be concealed. She consented to see a doctor, but she still kept to all her usual habits: the offices were said, recreation shared and all the work of the house attended to, and every spare minute was filled by individual intercourse with the Sisters. Knowing that she was soon to leave them, her heart seemed to yearn over the special needs of each, though even in this the spirit of entire self-abandonment entered, and she strove to trust her spiritual children to God as absolutely as she trusted herself. This state of things lasted till December 20, when she wrote to Madame Victoire,—“I am pretty well, considering my state; fasting is forbidden me, but I am quite able to keep *maigre*.” But that night she could not sleep, and though the next morning she got up and went to the first Mass, at which she communicated, she was hardly able to return to her cell. Even then the Sisters had some difficulty in persuading her to allow herself to be moved to the infirmary. That day, the Prioress worked hard at some needlework she was doing for a poor woman in Saint Denis, and when

one of the nuns observed that she was hardly fit for so much exertion, she answered, "Where will my vow of poverty be if I sit with my hands folded? The poor work from necessity, and we work from duty;—Paradise is well worth it." She also wrote to Madame Adelaïde and to the King, the last letter being addressed, "A Monseigneur et neveu, pour lui être remise après ma mort." That evening she joined the Sisters' recreation for the last time. The next morning, Saturday, December 22, after a very suffering night, the Princess attempted to get up and go to Mass, but she could not accomplish it. One of the nuns, seeing how grieved she was, suggested that Madame Louise might avail herself of her royal privilege, and have a celebration in her room, but the Prioress rejected that, saying she would not be treated differently from any other Carmelite. She was able to say her office, and tried to write to Madame Victoire, but was obliged to desist, and content herself with dictating a few lines to her sister.

In the afternoon, a painful attack of oppression made it necessary for Madame Louise to go to bed. As soon as the attack was somewhat relieved, she asked for the Abbé Consolin, and made an effort to rise and go to the confessional, but she could not do so, and M. Consolin came to her; she received him

saying, "Well, Father, this is the third time you have attended the death-bed of a Prioress of our house." Her confession made, she asked to receive the Viaticum and Extreme Unction; but her confessor did not think the end as near as it really was, and he told her that it was not yet time to give her those Sacraments. The Princess herself was sure that her end was very near, and she begged that the doctor might be consulted, as she earnestly wished there might be no delay, adding, "But I would have you follow all customary rules; I am not anxious; God will do whatever He wills with me, I trust myself wholly to His Mercy." The doctor was sent for, and he immediately pronounced that her condition was very serious, and wished M. Malouet, Madame Victoire's physician, to be called in. Meanwhile, the Abbé de Floirac, one of the Visitors of the house, came to see her, and found her so calm and bright that he could not believe her danger as imminent as was thought. The Sub-Prioress told Madame Louise that all the Sisters were praying fervently for her. "You are all very dear and good," she answered, "and I am not ungrateful; I have always loved you, and I love you more than ever, now that I am leaving you." She went on to beg that her Sisters would pray, not for her restoration to health, but that God's Will might be done in all things.

One of the nuns asked where her greatest pain was? "In my head," she answered; "I could not close my eyes all last night, and it seemed as though our Lord were pressing His crown of thorns upon my head." The Abbé Consolin came to her bed-side again, and she entered into conversation with him, saying, "You used to tell me, Father, that my fear of death would disappear when the time came, and now God enables me to face it without anxiety; the only thing I would wait for now, is to receive my Saviour." At seven o'clock she asked the nuns around her to say their litanies with her, and all through the evening she allowed the Sisters to come to her, listening to the little confidences they wished to make, and giving them her parting advice and instructions. All this fatigued her greatly, and the Sub-Prioress wished to keep her quiet, but the Mother refused her consent. "I am theirs to the last," she said, "they all are glad to see me, and I am glad to see them all." She was very anxious that all her children should offer up their sorrow for her loss to God, and so make it a source of spiritual gain to themselves. Seeing the Sœur Raphael, who was probably her dearest friend after the Mère Julie, very much overwhelmed with grief, the Mother turned to her, saying, "If my death is a sacrifice to you, Sister, remember that God requires it of you." Sœur Raphael answered that she did

entirely resign her will to God's ; and then the Mother gave her some parting advice, urging her specially to treat whoever was the next Prioress with entire confidence. In the middle of this conversation she felt a fresh attack of pain coming on, and exclaimed, "I cannot say any more ; oh make haste to let me have the last Sacraments, or it will be too late ! My God, let me live till I have had the blessing of receiving Thee !" She continued in constant prayer, frequently saying, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus, do not delay my happiness any longer !" The oppression was so great that she could not stay in bed, but was obliged to sit up in an arm-chair, her back supported by a little wooden box, as she would not have a pillow. The infirmière saw that one of the blankets she was wrapped in touched her face, and she was going to put something softer next it, but the Prioress refused the relief, saying, "It is all right so, do you want to set me up as a Princess?" At ten o'clock, M. Malouet arrived, and was extremely surprised to find a daughter of France in what appeared to him so comfortless a condition, as also to see her so calm and content in spite of her suffering state. M. Malouet thought she could not live through the night, and he took the other doctor into another room to consult as to what might be done to give any relief. At the Prioress's desire, Soeur Raphael

and another nun followed to hear their opinion. "If they grant that I am in danger, I may receive the Sacraments," she said. Sœur Raphael returned very shortly, and told the Mother that she might receive the Viaticum at once. At this announcement the dying Prioress could not contain her joy; she thanked the Sister warmly for keeping her promise, adding with her wonted humility "I will show my gratitude when I come to His Presence, if He deigns to have mercy upon me." Sœur Raphael could not help exclaiming, "Oh, Mother, how happy you are to be so near heaven, while we have to linger here on earth!" "All my hope is in God," the Mother answered; "and I will not forget you. But do not lose time, let everything be made ready that I may have the blessing of receiving my Lord." Another Sister who had been with the doctors, came in, and the Prioress said to her, "Well, Sister, now you know how it is with me, will you pray for me when I am gone?" Her confessor arrived speedily, but he still proposed to give her the Viaticum first, delaying Extreme Unction, as he did not think she was really so near death. When she was told that he had gone to the church to fetch the Blessed Sacrament, her love and joy waxed ever stronger, and she began to say the Miserere, asking her nurses to say it with her, as well as the Magnificat; she also repeated several times, "In Te

Domine speravi, non confundar in æternum." When the Priest entered bearing the Blessed Sacrament, she cried out, "My Heavenly Bridegroom has come. Oh, my God, it is very blessed to offer my life to Thee." And then she received the longed-for Viaticum with intense devotion and fervour. Shortly afterwards, the Abbé Consolin consented to give her Extreme Unction, during which ceremony he was so much agitated himself, as to interrupt the service for a moment. Madame Louise, herself calm and peaceful, turned to him, saying, "Courage, mon Père, courage, courage." At this moment there was an outburst of grief among the Sisters kneeling round, who had hitherto restrained their tears; and the Mother asked the Sub-Prioress to beg forgiveness for her of all the community, for whatever trouble she had caused by her want of regularity, her indolence, or any other fault. Her spirit of obedience to the rule appeared even at this last moment, when she whispered to a nun who was close to her, "Sister, your veil is not low enough." When the rite was ended, the Princess asked her confessor to say the prayers for the last agony. He answered that she was not yet in that extremity; but she replied, "Never mind, it would comfort me to take part in those prayers; I would fain lose none of them, for I covet all the prayers of the Church, while I have

full consciousness." She then sent messages of affection to Mesdames Adelaïde and Victoire by the Abbé Consolin. He asked if she wished to see them. "I should like to take leave of them," was the answer, "but a Carmelite ought to pray for her relations, without being over eager to see them." The Sisters asked if they should send for one of the Visitors to whom their Mother was specially attached, saying that he could arrive within twenty-four hours. "I shall not be here in twenty-four hours," she answered, and when they pressed to be allowed to send, the Prioress added, "Better not, a Carmelite ought not to involve her community in unnecessary expense, and besides if he were to arrive in time, it would only be an additional comfort to me, since by God's Grace, I am quite happy."

By this time it was midnight, and before her strength failed, the dying Prioress wished to say a few words to her spiritual children, who accordingly gathered round her. In a few very simple words she exhorted them to be faithful to their rule, to be very precise in punctuality, to be careful in observing silence, and to cultivate great love among themselves. She spoke of her own great love for them all, and her hope and belief that they would all be gathered together again hereafter. At this moment M. Malouet returned, and asked how she felt. "Quite

comfortable," she replied, "I have received my Saviour; Jesus is with me, and I am perfectly at rest." In a few minutes she sent further messages to her Royal sisters, through M. Malouet, begging him to tell them that she died in perfect peace, and that she commended her house and the doctor who attended there to them. M. Malouet wished to renew a blister which had failed to produce any effect. The Princess disliked it, but yielded, saying, "It will not do any good, and I would rather be left quiet, but if it is thought right, I ought not to refuse either obedience or suffering." Sœur Raphael was standing by the bed, and alluding to the fear of dead bodies which that Sister generally felt, the Mother said, "I suppose you will be afraid of me when I am dead, but you need not, I will not hurt anybody, and I promise you that if God in His Mercy lets me come into His Presence, I will pray that you may be able to conquer this weakness." Soon after she asked for a Crucifix, which Pope Clement XIV. had given her for her use "in articulo mortis;" by mistake, the Sister who went to seek it, brought the one which Madame Louise had sent to her father in his last illness; she recognised it, and said, "I should like to have it, but it would excite too many earthly remembrances in my heart, please give me the other." Sœur Seraphine who was ill herself, had been sent to lie down,

and the Mother thought it would be a great sorrow to her young zelatrice when she woke to find all over, so she sent for her, and took leave of her, rejecting any strong demonstration of earthly affection, as with the rest. "God only, my Sister," she said to another nun, who let fall some strong expression of earthly love for her, "God only, at such a moment." She frequently thanked the nursing Sisters, and apologised for giving them so much trouble; as her suffering increased, and speaking became a greater effort, she feared to be unkind in answering shortly when spoken to, and once or twice begged to be forgiven when she thought she had done so. She wished to give the two Crucifixes already mentioned to Sœur Raphael and the other infirmière. "But," she said, "it is only supposing that my successor gives consent, for God forbid that I should affect to dispose of anything as my own." In this way those few hours of the night passed by; the parting soul ever more and more wrapt in communion with Him Who had so long been her abiding portion. Her Sisters heard her say, "The time has come." And soon after, as though some light from heaven had broken in upon her, she exclaimed, "Come! let us make haste and go to Paradise!" These were her last words, and a few moments after she had passed gently and peacefully away. It was at half-past four

in the morning of Dec. 23, 1787, that the "Good Princess" heard her Advent call, and rising up quietly went forth to meet her Lord and Master.

The last earthly scene had scarcely closed, when two of the Visitors, the Abbé Rigaud, and the Abbé Bertin, arrived at Saint Denis, in hope of ministering to the closing hours of her whom they both loved and respected so well. Her attachment to the Abbé Bertin, from the time of that first interview when Madame Louise expressed her desire to become one of his Carmelite daughters, had been close and warm, and it was a sacrifice to her not to have his ministrations in the parting hour, as it was a real sorrow to the Abbé to have been absent. Finding on his arrival that God had already called His child, the Abbé went straight to the church, and there offered the Blessed Sacrifice on behalf of the departed soul. There was great sorrow and weeping among the community for their own loss, but who could grudge the end of all toil and waiting to her who was at rest? The four Visitors, the Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur de Juigné, (the venerable Monseigneur de Beaumont had preceded Madame Louise, and had left the scene of strife and care which his diocese presented) the Pope's Nunzio, and others, visited Saint Denis, to console the bereaved community, and to arrange concerning the burial of their Prioress.

The King's wishes were consulted, but Louis XVI. knew his aunt's mind, and he desired that the ordinary use of the Order should be followed on her behalf who was so true a Daughter of S. Teresa. The burial took place on S. John's Day, the Archbishop singing the Requiem Mass, and many other ecclesiastics, including the Benedictines of Saint Denis, assisting. The tomb was a vault beneath the Chapter. It was not long to remain undisturbed. When in the year 1793, the Municipal Council ordered the desecration of the Royal tombs in the Abbey of Saint Denis, Madame Louise's grave shared the fate of her royal ancestors, her coffin was torn from its resting place, and her remains thrown aside with theirs. In the year 1817, Louis XVIII. caused the pits into which these remains had been thrown, to be opened, and the confused heap of bones contained therein, to be taken once more to the vaults of Saint Denis; an inscription upon the coffins in which they lay, enumerating those princes who had been thus dishonoured. Among these the name of Louise Marie de France is to be found.

Troubles were thickening fast upon the Faith of Christ at the time of Madame Louise's death, and the suppression of religious houses was known to be imminent for some time before it actually occurred. In the year 1790, Soeur Raphael was elected Prioress

of the Carmelites at Besançon, where, after a short time, the peace of the community was disturbed by domiciliary visits and revolutionary oaths tendered to the nuns. The Mère Raphael stedfastly refused to take any such. "We know no vows except those of our baptism, and our vows to God," she answered, when the commissaires pressed her. "At all events, you can recognise liberty and equality, the great boon to France." "Pray, gentlemen," she asked, "is it allowed one by your code to tell lies?" "No, citoyenne." "Well, then, we cannot say that we enjoy liberty when you want to drag us from our holy home contrary to our will, neither can we affect equality, because we have superiors over us whose authority we do recognise, and always will recognise." The agents of the Revolution were vexed, but they could not help admiring the Mère Raphael. "That little Parisienne has plenty of brains," they said, "she is not easily frightened." These visits were frequently repeated, and on one occasion, an official, who was irritated by her firmness, raised his hand against her, exclaiming, "I could crush this little despot as I would a fly!" The Mère Raphael did not move an inch, but she answered calmly, "If you strike me, sir, you will only bring shame to yourself and glory to me." The man went away utterly disconcerted. All the little property which the nuns possessed was

taken away, including their altar vessels, and for a whole year, Mass was daily said for them in secret by two priests, who served each other for fear of detection. At last the Mère Raphael wrote to the Queen Clothilde of Sardinia, niece to Madame Louise, who had herself given the veil to Sœur Raphael in the happier days of Saint Denis, begging for an asylum in Italy for herself and some of the members of her community, if, as seemed probable, they were soon driven out of France. Queen Clothilde promised whatever help it was in her power to give. The dreaded time arrived, and on the Feast of S. Michael and All Angels, 1792, the Carmelite nuns were expelled from their house at Besançon. All, save one, belonged to the town, and took shelter with their friends or relations. The Prioress and this young Sœur Isabelle were left together, and for a time they found a shelter in the house of a pious lady of Besançon, but here too they were subject to a constant and most vexatious surveillance, which after some months ended in the arrest of the Mère Raphael, who was forcibly separated from Sœur Isabelle, and thrown into prison, whence it was intimated she would only be taken to the guillotine. At the end of a month, Sœur Isabelle, learning that the Prioress was ill, resolved at all hazards to nurse her, and applied accordingly to the municipality for per-

mission to enter the prison with this object. "Citoyenne Raphael is condemned to death," was the answer, "and if you go to her, you will not come out again except under the same sentence." "What does that matter?" Sœur Isabelle replied, "one must die some day." One of the municipal officers, touched by her self-devotion, allowed her to join the Mère Raphael, and they remained together in prison until, on the occasion of some victory or other official caprice, a number of prisoners were released, the two Carmelite nuns among the rest. The Mère Raphael's mother, Madame Hesselin, heard that her daughter was supporting herself by spinning wool at Besançon, and urged her to come and live at Paris, but the good nun clung to the hope of resuming her cloistered life, and persevered steadily in trying to get passports for herself and Sœur Isabelle, by means of which they might go into Piedmont. But the difficulties and vexatious delays attending on this were endless. In 1794, they were ordered to leave the town, and after some trouble, they fixed themselves in a neighbouring village called Berne; they were forbidden to approach the frontiers, and were ordered to show themselves daily to the municipal officers. The poor women applied for "*cartes de sûreté*," but the answer was, "A pretty thing for such people as you to expect, indeed! Every one has a right to shoot you down like a pair of wild

beasts." This was an uncomfortable state of things, and Sœur Isabelle lived in daily hourly dread. In about a month's time, they were ordered to bring their "*cartes de sûreté*" the next day. Calmly as usual, they went to the *mairie*, and were met with the demand for their *cartes*. "Our *cartes*, indeed!" the Mère Raphael answered, "it is for us to ask you about that! What would be said of you if it was known that you had let us be a month in the commune without taking the trouble to get them for us?" The officer was taken aback, and procured the necessary papers forthwith. On the occasion of one of these annoying visits, some one remarked that it was very humiliating for persons of the Sisters' former condition to have thus to present themselves for daily inspection. "Oh, no," the Mère Raphael answered, "nothing is humiliating except sin, which lowers us in God's Sight."

It was three years before the good Sisters succeeded in obtaining their passports for Sardinia, but at last they started, accompanied by three Carmelites from Dôle, and by the Abbé Ménétrier. They crossed the Great S. Bernard, and were hospitably received by the Fathers there, and after various perils in the descent, arrived at San Remi on the Italian side, only to be told that the King of Sardinia had forbidden the entrance of French emigrants, and that they could go

no further. But the Mère Raphael did not lose her presence of mind; she remarked that the Queen expected her, and that therefore any such prohibition did not affect her and her little company. But as it was not likely that the authorities would credit such an assertion, she asked for writing materials in order to address a letter to Her Majesty. The town could only furnish one sheet of paper, and this was torn in two, to enable the Mère Raphael to write both to Queen Clothilde, and to the Governor of Aosta. A young man of the place offered to take the letters, and meanwhile he offered the Sisters a large empty room, where they established themselves and their baggage to wait the Queen's reply. The answer was favourable, and at last the wanderers reached Turin safely, where they were kindly greeted by Queen Clothilde, who had not forgotten the Sister to whom she had given the veil in happy bygone days at Saint Denis. The Mère Raphael remained at Moncalieri in the Carmelite convent there for five years, during which the King and Queen of Sardinia visited her frequently. At the end of this time the revolutionary storm broke over those religious houses in their turn, and the French nuns returned to Besançon, where their Mother hoped to restore her community. This proved to be impracticable at the time, and as there seemed a better prospect in Paris, she and her faith-

ful friend, Sœur Isabelle, proceeded thither, and took up their quarters in the house of her mother, Madame Hesselin, until after that lady's death in the year 1802. The one great desire of the Mère Raphael's heart was to restore the convent of Saint Denis, but that proved to be hopeless; their former house was turned into a barrack, and there was no possibility of getting possession of it again. She then turned her thoughts to establishing such remnants as could be gathered of the former community in Paris, and after a good deal of trouble and perseverance, she took a house in the Rue Cassini, where at first only the two faithful companions repaired, outwardly as seculars, for the law still forbade both religious communities and habits. The small allowance granted to dispersed religious was altogether insufficient for their maintenance, and some friends made a representation on their behalf to the First Consul, which elicited from him the answer, "Let them live together, and one fire will warm them all." This was taken as a sort of side-long sanction to their resuming their cloistered life and the religious habit, which they gradually did. Denounced for so doing to the First Consul, by that time Emperor, he replied, "There must be some such places to receive all these silly people; and for their dress, it will cost them less if all wear the same, they can mend up their

things with one another's old clothes." After this the nuns took courage—several of their former community drew to them—the Mère Raphael was elected Prioress; the Vicaire Général of Paris, the Abbé de la Myre, having accepted the office of Superior, and presiding at their elections. The community was still called "Carmelites de Saint Denis." In the year 1830, the nuns feared that they were again about to be scattered, but God in His Good Providence spared them this trial, and they continued their life of prayer and contemplation without hindrance. The Mère Raphael, whether as Prioress—an office which at intervals she filled for fifteen years—or as a simple member of the community, was its great stay and life. Her memories of Saint Denis and of Madame Louise were never failing, and the Carmelites delighted in listening to all they could learn of the "Térèse de France," as she was fondly called.

The Mère Raphael lived to be ninety-one, and died of paralysis, November 17th, 1837, shortly after the conclusion of her annual retreat, in which her resolutions were, "To ask nothing; to refuse nothing; to bear everything without a murmur as known to God and one's-self only; and willingly to accept whatever may come to try or vex one."

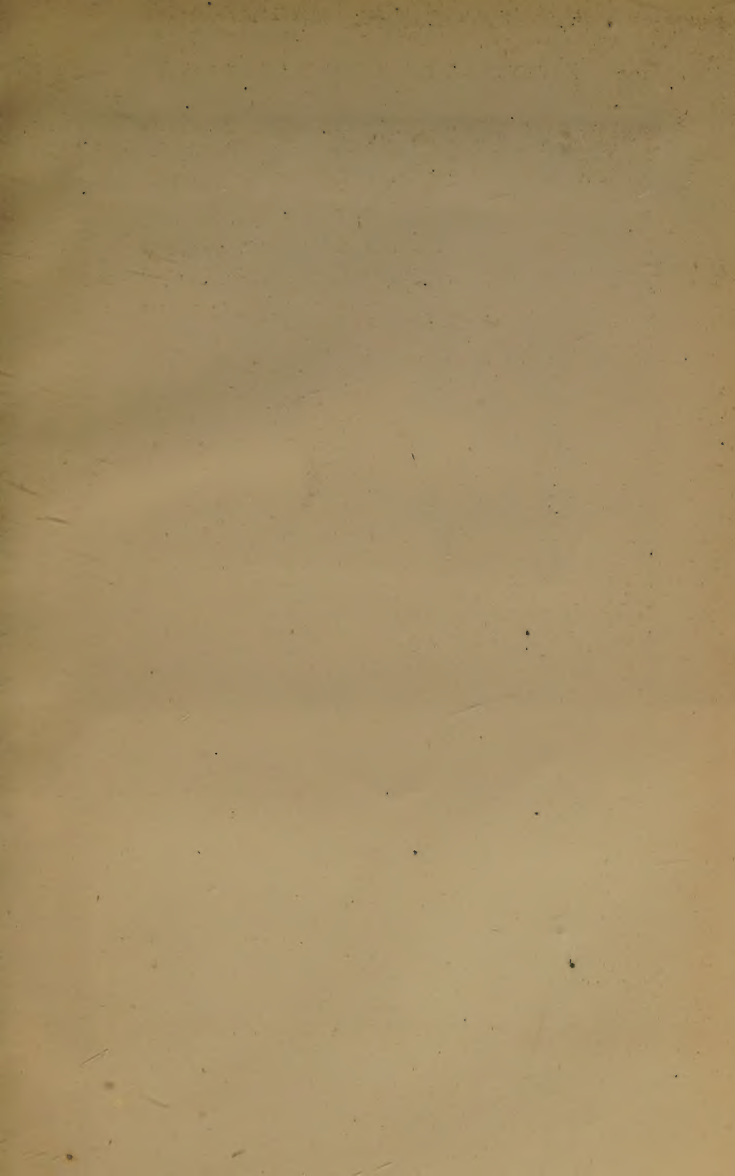
Within a year of the Mère Raphael's death, the

community found it desirable for various reasons to leave Paris, and the Bishop of Autun having offered to establish them in that town, they were transferred thither, still bearing the name so dear to them of Saint Denis.

Holy Ghost College
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Pittsburgh, Pa.

THE END.

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